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A STORY OF A GARDEN PARTY.

*'Bingo the Earl, Chivalry's pearl,
Went a-philandering after a girl.' Ancient Ballad.*

THE possession of such a name as Bingo gives me, I think, some claim upon the commiseration of the public. Bingo is not a name which inspires respect. It does not tell of a long line of ancestors, some of whom took part in the Norman Conquest and the Crusades; nor does it call up before the reader's eye a vision of a man of knightly bearing,—rather may it be said, if it suggests anything, to remind people of a small and insignificant dog, and you may be sure that was made the most of during my school-days. When I say that as a boy I have been led about at the end of a string, with a piece of blue ribbon at my neck, and been addressed as 'good doggie,' you will see that I have suffered much from my unfortunate patronymic.

Nor has it been made any better by my sponsorial appellation. It pleased my godfathers and god-mother, or more probably my parents, to call me Randolph. That is a name which was appropriate enough for a Border chieftain, a 'Warden of the Marches' who had the run of Branksome Hall, if there was anything left to eat after the retainers had dined;

for some gallant mosstrooper, who, after a life of daring, died on the congenial gibbet at 'merry Carlisle'; but it was no name for me. It was bad enough to be called Bingo; it was positively revolting to be called Randolph Bingo. I had serious thoughts of changing my name at one time, but gave it up on a friend's remarking that it would be a Norfolk-Howardly thing to do; but I never signed my name in full—it was always R. Bingo; and you might make what you liked out of the 'R.'—it might stand for the harmless Robert, or even for Rhadamanthus—I never confessed to anything but the plain initial.

Existence, however, was not entirely clouded by my absurd name. I had compensations. I was not bad-looking, as young men go nowadays, when there are a good many living proofs of Darwin's theories to be seen in any place of public resort; and I had a good income—rather over than under that received by the President of the Board of Trade in his official capacity. That I inherited from my father, who had been something—I never knew exactly what—in the West Indies, and I

had nothing to do for it. I was, in fact, a young man about town, and, having no occupation, I naturally took up a hobby.

You will never guess what it was. I look upon chinamanias as a delusion. I am not particularly fond of pictures. I hate insects, and I don't care about flowers. I am not averse to seeing other people make fools of themselves in private theatricals, but I would scorn to make an exhibition of myself. I have no æsthetic tastes, nor any leaning to science, and I think politics are an unutterable bore. But I have one mania, or rather I should say one peculiarity, and that is what may be medically described as chronic devotion to the fair sex. I am always in love. I am perpetually getting engaged, and as I never dream of being off with the old love before I am on with the new, things get a little mixed sometimes. People talk about love at first sight; that is a slow and hesitating passion to that which animates me. The mere mention of a girl's name is enough; I can fall in love with that, with a shadow on a blind, a specimen of handwriting, a flower, a photograph—with anything, in fact, that can call up the vision, however remote, of feminine loveliness. I can adore on provocation so slight that it would have no effect at all on other people. I fell in love once, for instance, because a young creature wore her hat low over her eyes, and looked up at me so bewitchingly from under it. Another enslaver used to climb a ladder in the paternal garden, and look down upon me from the fifth rung in such a way that I proposed on the spot. I fell in love with a soprano voice, and wrote it (the voice) warm letters, till I found out that it patronised 'buses and tram-cars, and

flung the aspirate about with positively lavish profusion.

Of course this extreme susceptibility led me into an enormous number of scrapes. I don't think I broke many hearts—none of the little affairs lasted long enough for that—but I caused much consternation, and upset the equanimity of quiet families who had too confidently received me as Jessie's or Ada's lover, as the case might be, and found out how soon I transferred my allegiance to another shrine.

When this artless narrative commences, I had just scrambled out of my twenty-third engagement. The word 'scrambled' does not imply dignity, and it was in a by-no-means-dignified manner that I had evaded my responsibilities on the occasion. The object of my affections had professed herself deeply injured by the withdrawal of my proposal—it had really been hardly one at all—just a whisper about an hour long in the conservatory, and she snapped me up like an alligator; and her brother had come and flourished a stick about, and been very hasty and absurd. He soon cooled down, however, while the young lady accepted a modest *solatium*, and married a curate two months afterwards.

Thus at the time of which I am speaking I was in what I may call a comparatively disengaged condition. My mind was open, as it were, for any new impressions—though, by the way, a letter from an old flame, a cousin Annie, had made me feel very spoony on her again; and I had a decided *penchant* for a young lady with divine hair I had been introduced to at a morning concert a day or two before. But still I was as open to further feminine influences as it was ever possible for me to be, and accordingly I accepted an in-

visitation to go down to Sunnyford Hall with infinite alacrity.

Sunnyford deserved its name. It was the breeziest brightest little village imaginable, and the Hall was worthy of it—a delightful old Elizabethan house, always full of pleasant company, which invariably included a number of the most fascinating girls to be found in the whole country-side.

I went down, therefore, with the liveliest anticipations of what the Americans call a 'good time'; but had I known what was to befall me, I would as soon have packed my portmanteau for Pandemonium as for Sunnyford. I must not anticipate, however, as they say in novels; let me state, then, that I arrived at Sunnyford Hall, and there I found what the local newspaper describing our archery-meeting called a 'perfect galaxy of beauty' assembled. I am not exaggerating when I say that I would willingly have led to the altar any one unmarried girl in the house who would have had me; and the difficulty of singling out one special object of devotion was really immense. At last I settled upon a most piquant little lady who rejoiced in the name of Georgina Barstow, who also seemed to have a real genius for flirtation, and to her I devoted myself as assiduously as a newly-elected member for a Radical constituency given to deputations devotes himself to the House. I am betraying no confidence when I say that Miss Barstow, like the immortal Barkis, was exceedingly 'willing.' Other swains hovered round her, for, like Mr. Locker's heroine, she was

'An angel in a frock,
With a fascinating cock
To her nose.'

but Georgie seemed to prefer your humble servant.

I proposed to her at a garden

party. We had been driven in by the rain, and were having afternoon tea in the house, and I was standing with Georgie at one of the French windows opening on to the lawn, when I made the plunge. She balanced her teacup thoughtfully for a moment, and then, to carry out the aquatic metaphor, she jumped in with me. For the twenty-fourth time in my life I was an engaged man, and upon my word I breathed more freely after it. I was so used to it, you see, that I felt quite uncomfortable without a young woman attached, as it were, to my fortunes.

Georgie and I had one brief bright hour of bliss—that is to say, of engaged bliss. We had experienced unengaged bliss to any extent previously, but we only had an hour after the fatal words were spoken; for an old aunt with whom she was staying carried her off at the end of that time, and left me disconsolate. However, I had no time to mope, as we were due at a ball that night some dozen miles off; and though I knew I should not meet Georgie there, I felt in excellent trim for the festivities. Who knows, I thought, but that I may meet some congenial spirit who will cheer the forlorn lover during his lady's absence! And egad the forlorn lover was cheered with a vengeance, as you shall see.

I went to the ball. The rule laid down by that excellent and easy-going poet Mr. Thomas Moore concerning the lips that are near when we are far from those we love, has been mine through life. On this occasion, the lips that were near were those of a young thing whose dancing was of the most sylph-like character, and whose conversation was so beautifully besprinkled with scraps of poetry that I had hard work to

keep myself up to her level. The Barstow was blonde, *petite*, and prosaic; my new friend was a brunette, rather over the average size, poetic and romantic—a complete contrast, in fact, in every way. Under such influences I became poetic and romantic myself; and as I engaged Miss Leland—for that was her name—for dance after dance, I need not tell you how my susceptible heart comported itself, and how, after two quadrilles, two waltzes, and a galop, I was hopelessly in love.

It happened in the conservatory. I have always been peculiarly susceptible to the influence of conservatories, and the moment we sat down among the camellias I knew what would happen. Miss Leland had been quoting *Hyperion*; and what could I do but, like Paul Fleming, tell her that the student Hieronymus was lying at her feet? I did not *quite* mean to propose, you know, but she took me up directly; and instead of playing the *rôle* of Mary Ashburton, she reclined her head gently on my shoulder (I ought to have said my arm was round her waist); and for the twenty-fifth time I was an engaged man. Of course I never remembered Georgie Barstow; but my thoughts went back to her with a sudden shock when I discovered that Miss Leland's name was also Georgina, and that she too expected to be called 'Georgie.' It then occurred to me also, for the first time, that I had carefully engaged myself to two ladies at once, and that the consequences might be a little awkward.

I went back to town next day with what I believe it is *de rigueur* to call 'mingled feelings'; and mine were certainly a good deal more mingled than was pleasant. Here were two charming girls both willing to be Mrs. Bingo,—I don't

mean together, but separately,—and I really didn't know which to choose. Never surely was mortal man impaled on the horns of a livelier dilemma; and the more I looked at it the less I liked it.

The plot thickened next morning when the post brought me two letters. They had both written, bless their hearts; and in two different handwritings a little flutterer remained, at the end of a charming epistle, my 'affectionate Georgie.' At any rate, these letters must be answered while I made up my mind on the matter. So in a spirit of fairness, which I think deserves commendation, I despatched the same neat little letter to both, only altering the superscription. One Georgie should not crow over the other, if they ever compared notes, if I could prevent it.

In the mean time, I never felt more perplexed in my life. Frequently as I had been engaged before, there had been only one lady in each case, and now I had two on hand at once. A too susceptible heart was certainly a very dangerous organ. Nor could I consult any one. I mentioned my difficulty to one friend, hoping he would be touched by my position and give me some good advice, but he received the news with demoniac laughter, and persisted in calling me 'Bingo the Bigamist,' which he declared would make a capital title for a play.

The more I thought the matter over the more awkward it seemed; and in the mean time, of course, both engagements went on. Each of the dear creatures wrote every day, and I was kept at work answering them. The same letter would not do after the first, and I was always afraid of mixing up the letters and referring to the

tender inquiries of Miss Barstow in an answer addressed to Miss Leland. The prosaic Georgie Number One clashed with the poetic Georgie Number Two in my mind in the most confusing manner, and it was all I could do to keep them distinct. I received two engagement rings, and duly returned two, both of precisely the same pattern; and locketts also, the jeweller grinning in a most aggravating manner when I ordered them. Both the Georgies sent photographs also; and altogether I was driven nearly wild.

At last there came a crisis. I received letters from their respective mothers. Number One hadn't a father, and Number Two's male parent didn't appear to trouble his head much about the matter; and they informed me they were both coming to town on the same day, arriving at the same station. I was in despair; the only comfort was, they were not coming by the same train. Miss B. was to arrive in the morning, and Miss L. in the afternoon. There was nothing for it but to pluck up courage and meet them both; and I did so. I met Georgie Barstow, and was received rapturously. I lunched with her and her mother at their hotel; and I tore myself away from her on the plea of a pressing engagement,—true enough, forsooth,—and flew to meet Georgie Leland and dine with her and Mrs. L. at *their* hotel.

Then began a state of things which is but feebly described as appalling. I had to dance attendance upon each lady every day; and after blissful moments—or rather moments which should have been blissful, but weren't—to invent excuses and fly off for ditto with the other. I was in perpetual fear, of course, of meeting Number One, after inventing a series of engagements, when escort-

ing Number Two. London is large enough, no doubt; but there is no place in the world in which you so often meet the very people you wish to avoid. They were both charming girls singly, and I could have been devoted to one of them; but together they were too much for me. I felt my mind giving way under the strain of a double devotion, and my hair growing gray from the tax this dual existence made upon my energies. It was really something frightful. They had neither of them seen many of the sights of London, and I had to do all the show places *twice*. Judge if any human being could stand that! And when I add that I visited Madame Tussaud's admirable exhibition in Baker-street twice in one day, with one Georgie in the morning and the other in the afternoon, with a short interval for lunch, and that the door-keeper evidently recognised me, and must have thought I had a relation in the Chamber of Horrors,—you will admit that even the two victims of my susceptibility would have pitied me had they known my position.

I rose each morning with a feeling that the climax might come on that particular day, and I went to rest at night like a man who had been sentenced to death and then reprieved. No wonder I grew worn and gray, and showed my anxieties in my face. Both my Georgies remarked it, bless their sympathetic little hearts, little knowing that they were the burden which was wearing me to a shadow. One morning I rose with a peculiarly ominous feeling in my mind; and it was not relieved when I heard from Miss Leland in the morning that I should be expected to escort her with some friends to the Opera that night. I agreed, however;

and in the afternoon I sped off to take Miss Barstow to a morning concert. She was engaged for the evening—I did not ask how; and after seeing her home I rushed to the club and dined, and then went to the Opera. I shall never forget that awful evening. It was the *début* of Zaré Thalberg. She came out, as you remember, in *Don Giovanni*, and all eyes were centred on the Zerkina of the night. I had neither eyes nor thoughts for singer or music, for the moment I took my place in a box on the O.P. side, in dutiful attendance on Miss Leland, I became conscious that in the box exactly opposite to us there was Miss Barstow and her mother; and though they would possibly resent the imputation, they glared at me.

Then Georgie Barstow, with cruel kindness, bowed to me with *empressement*.

'Dear me,' said Miss Leland, 'who is your friend, Randolph?'

Now I was prepared for such a position as this, and had the answer ready; so I replied blandly and coolly, 'O, my second cousin.' Not 'cousin,' you will observe; 'second cousin,' which is more remote and more circumstantial. No one could doubt a statement about such a relative, or be jealous of her. So I thought, at least; but Miss Leland said, with considerable *hauteur*,

'Indeed! She seems much surprised to see you. Hadn't you better go and speak to your *second cousin*? I am longing to be introduced.'

'Jealousy,' I said to myself; and then I said, as quietly as I could, 'Well, perhaps I had better go round for a moment,' and hastened off to Number One.

I found Georgie Barstow in a similar frame of mind—that is, in a state of aggravated jealousy.

She scorned to ask me any questions; but her mother begged to know who my friends on the other side of the house were in a tone which would have frozen the Victoria Nyanza. Having found a second cousin rather a failure, I said mildly that it was my cousin's wife, whereat the old woman looked suspicious and Georgie sniffed. I was evidently in hot water here also, and was just going to make my escape, when Mrs. Barstow said,

'Perhaps you will introduce us after the opera is over, Mr. Bingo. We have seen so few of your friends.'

I could only bow and rush out and cool my burning head in the lobby, and try and collect my thoughts.

I dare not go back to either box, for I felt certain some one would come in, and I might be betrayed, as the lady with Miss Leland knew a good many people in town; and I was, besides, in so excited a state I might commit myself. My head was whirling, and I hardly knew where I was. At last, in desperation, I tore a couple of leaves out of my pocket-book and wrote two notes. They were both alike, with the necessary alteration, and ran as follows:

'Dearest Georgie,—Very sorry. A telegram has called me away, so I must put off introducing you to my { second cousin }
{ cousin's wife }. See you to-morrow.—Your own devoted
'RANDOLPH.'

And I sent a man with them to each box.

That was all very well; but, after twisting up the notes, in my hurry and excitement I misdirected them, and Georgie Barstow received with astonishment my excuse about my 'second cousin,' while Georgie Leland heard

with equal astonishment of my 'cousin's wife.' Furthermore, they would see each other reading the notes, would divine at once that they had gone wrong, and, as a natural consequence, that I had two 'dearest Georgies,' and was the 'own devoted Randolph' of my second cousin and my cousin's wife. I say they would see all this, for I fled from the house and rushed home like a madman. What took place afterwards at the theatre, I don't know; but I do know what happened next morning, and I am not likely to forget it while memory holds a seat in this bewildered brain.

In the first place, I received a letter early in the morning, delivered by hand, which contained the following:

'Sir,—We have met, and know all.

GEORGINA BARSTOW.

GEORGINA LELAND.

'R. Bingo, Esq.'

Prepared as I was, I was stunned when another letter came to revive me, which informed me that Mrs. B. and Mrs. L. would call on me that morning, and also that they had instructed their respective solicitors to commence immediate actions against me for breach of promise of marriage. That was pleasant; but there was a more trying surprise than all to come next.

I had just finished my breakfast, and was vaguely wondering how I should face the situation, when the door opened, and my servant—the rascal was grinning, and had evidently been bribed—ushered in the two Georgies!

You have heard of people wishing the earth to swallow them; but if the Mælstrom had yawned before me then I should have taken a header into it.

I started up and gasped; I could do nothing else.

Gazing at me sternly and in complete silence, they put down on the table together the rings, locket, photographs, and other presents I had given them. Even in my agony I could have laughed to see how each little pile contained exactly the same articles, and my letters, including the two fatal notes I had sent the previous night. Then they slowly retired, all this time without saying a word, while I of course was speechless; but just as they were going out of the door Georgie Barstow—she was always an impulsive little thing, bless her heart!—found her feelings too much for her, and ejaculated the simple but all-sufficing word 'Wretch!' And then I was alone again.

I did not wait for the mothers or the solicitors. I fled. Before leaving the country, however, I wrote to the parents of the outraged damsels, saying that, as I was honestly willing to marry both of them did the laws of my country permit it, I would marry either of them if they chose to submit their claims to the arbitrament of the customary coin, or, in other words, toss up for me. Nothing, I'm sure, could be fairer; but I received no reply, and to save them the trouble of proceeding against me I left the country.

I remained in foreign lands two years. I will not say where, though Sir George Nares could tell, as he listed, how the name of Bingo was not unknown even on the verge of the Palæocretaceous sea; and I did not return till my victims were happily married. But the story got wind, and my duplex matrimonial intentions afforded a theme for the scoffer; so that though I am innocent of the crime, I am known from China to Peru as 'Bingo the Bigamist.'

H. SAVILE CLARKE.

PROUD MAISIE.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALBERT GREY.

I TAKE it that intellect stands first among the most facile charms a man can exercise over women, much as beauty is a woman's prime and most universal attraction for men. Yet there is nothing in such a conclusion for any young lover, modestly aware that his head-piece is not the strongest part about him, to distress himself about. Here, as elsewhere, Nature manages to preserve a sort of rough equality in her arrangements. Does not a special providence decree the ugliness of heiresses? And there is another unwritten law, which has laid down that the highest training, the extreme sharpening of masculine wits and untiring activity of the masculine brain, shall tend to do away in their possessor with those other engaging qualities which—call them trifling, superficial though we may—go so far towards the winning of fair women—manly composure, courteous deference, consideration, grace of presence and manner—all of which, to say the truth, it requires a certain amount of mental leisure not to lose.

Thus the scales are adjusted, and a blessed thing it is. For the quick-witted, practised, ready expert of many talents, who has escaped the drawbacks of his advantages; who in society is not affected, nor absent and preoccupied; who is neither a bore, nor a fidget, nor a slattern, nor a cynic; who can hold his tongue, and yet not lapse into supercilious or self-absorbed silence; who has not let his theoretical devotion to humanity generally betray him into a

petty egotism most trying to his fellow-creatures individually,—he is one, 'if ever such wight were,' to make sad and indiscriminate havoc among female hearts.

To the large colony of English resident in Ludwigsheim that winter was a memorable one, simply through the addition to their circle of Mr. Albert Grey. Alighting in the place quite suddenly, he had found his level at once, and found it on a pedestal. He had brought introductions to a leading family or two, and before long he knew everything about everybody, and everybody everything about him. He was a man of mark to begin with. A very little literary fame goes far in any coterie, and Mr. Grey, besides being correspondent to a leading London newspaper, had just published a particularly readable book, the *Romance of Ancient Architecture*, which was making a genuine hit, and soon found its way to everybody's drawing-room table. He was now writing another, which was not to be sketchy and popular, but profound and in several volumes, and for which he was here to consult the Ludwigsheim library.

So much for his work. For his play he had begun to give courses of lectures on fine art, and by way of illustrations to these he got up excursions to the art-galleries, museums, and other curiosities in which the town abounded.

The English alone settled in Ludwigaheim were numerous enough for such a scheme to answer, without counting the Germans, or the birds of passage who made the town their halting-place

on their way to Italy. But in a little speculation where other men could at most have hoped not to fail Albert Grey created a kind of furor. Nor was it without reason. It was not through display of miscellaneous knowledge. The wisdom of Solomon and a penny cyclopædia bound in one would never alone have won him such influence. Of how many students that we see is one inclined to exclaim, 'He heapeth up riches' (of learning), 'but knoweth not who shall gather them.' What becomes of this hoard of information these intellectual misers are always adding to? They seem unable both to benefit others and to profit by it themselves.

Now it was the rarest and not the least among Mr. Grey's mental gifts that he was master, so to speak, of his raw material—knew how to sift, knead, mould, bake, and to impart to those who required it at his hand. The result was that his lecture-room became in as great vogue as a popular theatre. The ladies of Ludwigsheim wept over their neglected education and determined to redeem the time. Even the sober old men discovered that he had always something to tell worth knowing, and that they never had known.

For artists these 'evenings' were particularly valuable, and I went there with Eva, to please her at first, but soon to please myself. What was I that I should be superior to the luxury of having my brain tickled? The lectures acted upon me like an ingenious play. Just as long as they lasted, the subject, the persons and incidents the lecturer brought before us so graphically, had a vital interest for me—my head could busy itself over the ancient Romans or the Renaissance painters, my heart warm over their trials, struggles, and

achievements. True, by the next morning all my fervour had faded away; but even such passing allurements were too pleasant to be despised, nor perhaps were they without their effect in the long-run.

It was about a fortnight after our first meeting with him that the following note reached us from Mrs. Meredith:

'My dear little Miss Maisie,—I take it for very unkind that you and Miss Eva have never been once to see me since our return last week. Do come, without loss of time—to-day if you can, to-morrow at the latest. Francis Joseph longs to make your acquaintance. And will you and Miss Eva dine with us on Saturday?

'Ever your devoted

SOPHIE.

'P.S. We are expecting one English gentleman that evening, whom I shall so much like to introduce to you—Mr. Albert Grey—the most cleverest man you have ever met.'

Over this postscript we laughed a good deal. Had Sophie too been awakened to a sense of ignorance hitherto unrepented of? A little intellectual craze would no doubt be a nice and innocent pastime for whiling away the long dull winter. As a lady's craze it needed of course a cavalier to lead off the dance, and here was Mr. Grey, who asked nothing better for his leisure hours.

We went to Sophie's that afternoon, and found him there. She was much surprised and rather disappointed to find that no introduction was wanted, but, this being so, seemed well satisfied to see us on easy pleasant terms with her new friend. As soon as he had left she began to speak his praises, and Sophie knew no half-measures in her admiration. Every lecture, every excursion of his she meant to attend. From a

social point of view he would prove the most valuable acquisition in the world, she felt sure, and she was bent on improving his acquaintance. Even Leopold, who was present, and in a pretty good humour, admitted that he liked the fellow. Grey gave himself 'no cursed airs.' Wide apart though the two men were in most respects, it needed but to watch them together to perceive that there existed a tacit kind of freemasonry between them—the involuntary mutual understanding between gentlemen who have seen more, perhaps, of the wrong side of the world than of the right. With Leopold Meredith Grey found that he had several acquaintances in common. With whom had he not? To Leopold Meredith Grey could make himself the best of all good company. To whom could he not? Then he would sit up for hours with Leopold in the smoking-room, and had withal a collection of pipes far superior to Mr. Meredith's own, and which would alone have entitled him to Sophie's husband's respect. Thus he dropped naturally and quickly into the place of an *habitué* at their house, where we met him constantly in the evenings—evenings which I began to perceive were insensibly becoming the feature of the season.

One night in particular I recollect, when he had contrived to keep the dinner-table, if not in a roar, at least in a perpetual ripple of laughter from first to last. We three ladies then left the two gentlemen *tête-à-tête* to tell stories, strange and excellent no doubt, but which we, as ladies, were compelled to forego.

Sophie took us first to the nursery to look at the sleeping Francis Joseph.

She simply idolised him, in a motherly, sensible sort of way,

but it had often struck me that Leopold was not very fond of the child. Luckily Sophie was not sensitive on this point. 'All Englishmen hate babies,' she observed, 'and Leopold *will* not see that this little love is his living image. It has its father's temper too. Ask nurse. Never has she seen a child of three—four—months with so strong a will.'

We then returned to the cheerful drawing-room, all Dresden china and looking-glasses, and gathered round the open stove. Snow was falling outside. From the adjoining apartment there came every minute the pleasing echoes of renewed laughter. But shut out though we were from this after-dinner merriment, we indemnified ourselves by freely discussing the gentlemen over the fire.

'Leopold has never been so little bored,' said Sophie, laughing to herself at the sound of his voice. 'I thought sure he would find German life dull, after English.'

'Do you ever think of going to live in England?' I hazarded suddenly.

'One day it may happen, I daresay,' replied Sophie, 'but no hurry. Leopold's brother, Lord Meredith, you know, has behaved shameful to him—shameful! Now Lord and Lady Meredith would be glad to be friends with him again. But my Leopold has something to say to that. In time he may perhaps relent; but we wish them both to regret the way in which they treated him years before.'

By his marriage with the heiress, Leopold, it seemed, had effectually redeemed his character in the sight of his relations.

'When do you think you shall go?' I asked, troubled by odd floating visions of an intrusive past mixing itself forcibly with the present.

'O, next summer, or the next. I don't know. Leopold means to stay here for the season. He is fond of aleighing, and in the evening he goes to sleep or has Mr. Grey, who will dine with us as often as we like. What a man is that!' and she sighed admiringly; 'he knows the world like his hand.'

'Men's privilege,' sighed Eva sententially.

'And one that we need not, sure, want for ourselves,' rebuked Sophie, wisely shaking her head. 'But I wish you would tell me, *mignonne*—you, who knew this Mr. Grey long, long ago,'—for Mrs. Meredith was nothing if not inquisitive, and Eva's secret had transpired one afternoon over that fatal coffee,—'what think you of him now as compared with then?'

'I think I should like him better now,' said Eva oracularly, 'if I had not known him then.'

'What! was he so much more charming then, *mignonne*?' she asked, with curiosity.

'He was so much younger a man,' said Eva.

'Fie! Grey is not old. To look at him you would not give him thirty year. He has thirty-five, though. He told Leopold himself.'

'He was always charming,' sighed Eva, 'but in a more frank and natural way.'

'Ah, but now he is a famous man—or on the road to be. You cannot expect the spirits of a boy. You know he will soon have finished his great work, and then we shall all hear speak of him. I would the king might give him some post here. He talks German perfect, and likes Ludwigsheim. There is only one thing that he does want.'

'And that is?'

'A wife. O, you may laugh; but such men do. It would be a true kindness to find him one.'

We laughed the more at her grave and matter-of-fact-like tone.

'Not so easy,' I suggested.

'Nor so difficult, dear,' said Sophie, nodding her head with matronly superiority. 'Between you and me, Mr. Grey is a man—what the French call *revenu des femmes*. These are always the easiest to fix. Now all Ludwigsheim, except you two, has gone mad after him. But, between you and me again, my desire is to marry him to my cousin Charlotte.'

This revelation checked further irreverent mirth on my part. I was even struck with a certain admiration for the cool practical manner in which she acted up to her views of life.

Of cousin Charlotte we knew little, but believed there was nothing particular to know, beyond the fact that she was the eldest child of a *mésalliance* between an aunt of Sophie's and a wealthy but middle-class merchant, which stood in the way of her marrying into the upper ten.

'And I always said,' continued Sophie, 'that if I married her to one who was not noble he should be an Englishman. Lolotte is just the wife Mr. Albert Grey is wanting, and has the little fortune he would like besides.'

'A capital match,' said I gravely.

'You see,' she resumed, laughing, 'it is so nice that I can talk of it all, openly, to you and Miss Eva. You will not be jealous of Lolotte. For you, Eva, say downright you care no more for him; and as for you, Maisie *mignonne*—'

'Well?' said I, wondering to what her shrewdness was tending.

'You would first ask that such a man should fall in love with you before you even look at him twice: Now Mr. Grey will never lose his heart again to anybody. He told me so, and why.'

At this crisis the two gentle-

men chose to come in, and cut short the dialogue just when it promised to become interesting.

When we left that night the snow had ceased; but the streets were so slippery that it was considered safer for us to walk the little distance to the Carolinenstrasse, under Mr. Grey's escort. As we went, he surprised us by an inadvertent heartfelt exclamation that, of all the insupportable bores he had ever had to entertain, Mr. Meredith was the heaviest in hand.

'Then why do you come so often to do penance?' asked Eva innocently.

The same question had been on the tip of my tongue, but something checked me.

'I suppose every one who does penance does it for much the same reason,' replied Mr. Grey quickly, speaking to Eva, but looking my way—'for the sake of some reward that's not to be had otherwise.'

'What did he mean?' asked Eva, when we had parted from him at the gate.

'How should I know?'

'I thought you might. What was he saying to you so earnestly to-night when Mrs. Meredith ran up and fetched you away to look at the photographs of her family?'

I laughed. She was jesting, of course, and so was he. It was all a jest; and in it, as a jest only, I meant to join.

An episode in a life sometimes narrowly misses growing, so to speak, into the plot of it. A seafarer cut off from old moorings, and with no new haven in view, adrift on dull waters for a little space, sights some shore. He will stop just to see it, he thinks; then after a day or two pass on and forget it, of course. So slight an interlude can leave no perceptible trace. But the island he has reached is firm and the sea is dreary. His

attention is occupied by the spot and its novel features, and he forgets that the world is wide. He lingers to explore every nook. Gradually these new impressions assume more influence, and estranged as he is from his own self, and severed from the past, the exile flatters himself at last that he can extemporise a new home. Many may do so and not repent. Only beware nostalgia, the irrecoverable *mal du pays* of some hearts, trying to live again in another medium from that in which they first took root.

In due time Lolotte arrived at Sophie's to stay. She was really charmingly pretty, very like a china doll, opening and shutting her blue eyes in something of the same unvarying way, angelically mild and amiable in disposition. She was one to be loved at first sight, but held out no promise of hidden perfections.

About a fortnight later, Sophie confided to us, one morning at the studio, that all was going on just as she wished, and that already Mr. Grey's attentions were becoming very marked.

'To whom?' said Eva, who could not dissemble, and whom Mrs. Meredith's self-assumed arbitration in the matter of Mr. Grey's future seemed particularly to provoke. 'It was to Maisie, and not to your cousin, that he chose to talk the whole of yesterday evening.'

'Of course, of course. But how blind you are! That was to excite the jealousy of the other. Lolotte is rather sleepy, you know;' then turning to me, 'You thought it was for that only, did not you, *mignonne*?'

'I never thought about it,' said I. 'Mr. Grey and I were quarrelling so fiercely the whole time, because I would not admire his favourite pre-Peruginesque Italian painters enough.'

'There,' said Sophie triumphantly, 'what he likes is a child like poor Lolotte, who will never differ from him on any subject whatever.'

'But I suspect,' said Eva obstinately, when Mrs. Meredith was gone, 'that Mr. Grey would rather spend his life in quarrelling with you than in agreeing with Lolotte, or any one else indeed.'

I disclaimed vehemently and quite sincerely, believing I knew better. For however sharp and penetrating we will be, we shall never be safe against occasional stone-blindness to what lies directly under our nose.

Mr. Grey was really attentive to Charlotte, when he had time, and happened not to forget. Mrs. Meredith began to look upon it almost as a settled affair. But the crisis had not come; and the next thing was to go casting about in her mind how to bring it about. There came a week when Leopold happened to be away, and she pounced upon the opportunity to give a children's party at her house. It was in Francis Joseph's honour nominally, of course, but got up really for the sake of Lolotte, who was to preside over the younger visitors; a part in which she would appear to the greatest advantage. Mr. Grey had promised to come; he was fond of children, and would help Lolotte to amuse the little ones. Then Sophie had her plan for accidentally leaving the two young people alone for a few minutes, confident that Mr. Grey would not fail to seize upon this occasion for declaring himself.

All promised fair, when the day before the party Lolotte caught so bad a cold that she was unable to leave her room on the morrow. Sophie was out of patience at the unlucky *contre-temps*—far more concerned than the heroine herself, who submitted

meekly enough to the inevitable, and would cheerfully have made her appearance with a swelled face tied up, had not Sophie sternly forbidden such a measure.

The party without her went right merrily, thanks chiefly to Mr. Grey. He was in the highest spirits, and for the whole afternoon romped with the children with more than a child's zest. His tricks, his games, his pranks, his devices won all their hearts. Caught by the spirit of the thing, I seconded him vehemently. We improvised scenes, dances, masquerades, charades, and all manner of entertainments. Never, for a moment, was Mr. Grey at a loss. The children were half mad with delight. The little revel was at its height when the dining-room door was flung open, showing the table whereon the young people's feast was spread, and Sophie presiding at the top, where Lolotte, alas, should have sat.

He made the children troop in, two and two, himself taking my arm and bringing up the rear. But when the last small couple had trotted through the door, instead of following, he closed it, shutting us off into the drawing-room.

'Just one moment, by your leave,' he said, laughing, and leading me to the sofa, 'for the master of the ceremonies to get his breath.'

I sank down, laughing too, and no less exhausted, by racing about at hide-and-seek and blind-man's buff.

'Miss Noel,' said he, 'I haven't worked so hard for years. *Où*, the romp has been too much for somebody's hair.'

Putting up my hands, I found, to my dismay, that it was streaming in admired disorder over my shoulders.

'Stay as you are; don't touch it,' said he, taking hold of both my hands to prevent me. 'You would

make such a fine picture just now. You look so like, so like—'

'A Fury,' I suggested.

'A Menad or Bacchante—no, not that either; you have no red in your hair. Shall we say the Lesbian just before she took the leap? No, that's not it.'

And there in that attitude he kept me till he despaired of finding a simile to his taste. Then my hands were released, and I began slowly to twist up my locks into their accustomed ball behind.

'Have you quite done with me as your lay-figure?' I asked, rallying. 'Shall I do to hang a sonnet, or perhaps even a novelette, upon I Tell me, now, which of your compositions do you mean to put me into?'

'Hush! ah, no!' he said, shocked; 'you can surely not think so ill of me as to suppose—'

'Indeed, you have often told me that the most insignificant acquaintance never comes amiss to the student of human nature, as he goes gleaning about for stuff for his literary work.'

'Now, don't,' he said beseechingly; 'after all, one is a human being before one is a student; and there *are* acquaintances who teach one new things about oneself.'

'Very true,' said I mournfully; 'you have taught me that I am a hopeless ignoramus on a thousand important subjects, about which I shall never venture to pronounce an opinion again.'

'And you,' he returned, facing me suddenly with a penetrating look, 'have helped me to unlearn—'

'Miss Noel! Mr. Grey!' cried the shrill voice of Mrs. Meredith from within, and cut him short. He uttered an exclamation, which I fancy I was not intended to hear. The next instant Sophie opened the door.

'Are you never going to join us? We are all waiting for you.'

'Coming, coming,' said Mr. Grey; adding, in a lower tone to me, as we rose, 'Shall I see you in the sculpture-gallery to-morrow?'

'O, yes,' I replied recklessly; 'I always go there with Eva on Wednesdays.'

CHAPTER XVIII.

UNDER THE MEDUSA.

THE next day Eva and I spent among the marbles in the museum, where she was making studies from the antique. I had betaken myself thither with the ambition of 'doing' the twelve halls into which the Ludwigsheim collection is divided. It was the twentieth time that I had started with these laudable intentions; and for the twentieth time I got no further than the room next to that in which Eva was at work, there coming to a standstill before a wonderful head of Medusa, whose fascination forbade me to fix my mind on the surrounding sculptures. Her look followed me about, saying, 'Why waste your attention on this and on that whilst you can look at me?'

At last I fell to attempting to sketch her, which at least afforded a sensible pretext for allowing her to monopolise my contemplations.

Presently I saw Mr. Albert Grey come round with a party of friends. He stopped for a moment to ask why I had selected the Medusa to try my hand upon.

'Because it haunts me,' I replied, without looking up, 'and I thought this might, perhaps, break the spell; just as, when you have a tune running in your head that you want to get rid of, you might try to whistle it away.'

He laughed and passed on. Half an hour afterwards, having parted with his companions, he came

sauntering back, and finding me in the same place stood still, looking over my shoulder, shaking his head at my depravity of taste, and taking pains to prove to me that my beautiful Medusa was the daughter of a period when art was on the decline. I resented this, and with more zeal than discretion, thus drawing down on myself a little lecture upon the three stages of Grecian sculpture.

I think he can never have met with so unruly and irreverent a pupil. But whether he chose to imagine that I was not so utterly destitute of sense and sensibility on the subject as I chose to appear, he persevered. The more obstinate and heretical my mood, the more persuasively entertaining he became. And though all the while I was thinking rudely, 'O these clever men, how well they talk! but much they care for their listener. Talking has become to them a gratification in itself; they enjoy it as a skater enjoys cutting figures on the ice;' yet the rare, easy, pleasant grace of manner which won him popularity everywhere—the net in which my Eva's girlish heart had once long ago been entangled—was not without its effect on me now.

By and by, suspecting that I was not listening to his sermonette, he made an end of it, and began instead to criticise my sketch, giving me a number of hints so sharp and to the point that I glanced up at him suddenly in astonishment. He stopped short in the middle of a sentence, as he met my wondering eyes.

'I can't understand in the least,' said I, 'how, after having once adopted painting as a profession, you should have given it up.'

'It did not satisfy me, nor I myself in it,' he replied.

'I suppose you were not easily satisfied in those days.'

'Nor am I now,' he returned; 'only, since I started in life, I have learnt the grand lesson the world teaches—to be content with half satisfaction.'

'Come,' said I, 'wherever you started from, you ought to be satisfied surely with your position and prospects in the race now.'

'Perhaps,' said he; 'but mine has been such an odd career, Miss Noel. Suppose, whilst you go on with your drawing, I were to tell you a story which will answer the question of how I chanced ever to take up art, ever to leave it, and to become exactly what you see me to-day.'

'Do,' said I, feeling supremely interested for the moment, as usual, whatever the subject he was holding forth about. What sort of an autobiographical sketch would his be? I had often wondered, and wished to know.

The gallery was almost deserted. Eva was out of earshot in the next hall. The old warder, waddling up and down, eyed us approvingly as he passed. He probably thought I was taking a drawing-lesson as I sat there on a camp-stool with block and pencils, Medusa looking down on me from one side, Albert Grey on the other.

'My parents were very rich and very indulgent people,' he began, 'who brought me up in clover, under the impression that ringing the bell was the immediate cause of dinner, and that every man's natural inheritance included not only a fair share of the earth, but a house, furniture, servants, money to pay for whatever he wanted, and that he was never likely to want anything that money couldn't buy.'

'I was to be the clever boy of my family, and did begin by carrying off the honours at school. I found this easy, and unluckily became restless to distinguish myself in other ways, and finding

this easier still, succeeded so well as to cut short my Eton career! But I needn't trouble you with my school and college scrapes. I was not quite so reckless as I seemed. I knew that I had within me the ability to retrieve all the time and chances I was throwing away, whenever I chose. And Fortune has always encouraged me to believe in my lucky star. I was still quite a young fellow when the father of one of my college friends—Lord X. let us call him—took an immense fancy to me, and I became his private secretary.'

'Indeed!' said I, surprised. 'Why, then, here's another rôle you have tried, and thrown up.'

'Ah, you mean I might have meddled in diplomacy—yes—entered Parliament, risen who can say how high on the ladder. For I had inclination then, interest too—there was everything in my favour, but—' he hesitated.

'But?'

'Lord X. had a daughter;' and he stopped again, with a half laugh, adding frankly, 'You are wondering what possesses me to retail all this to you. If I go on, I know you will put me down either as a fatuous fool, or a villain making his apology.'

'Go on,' said I, laughing, 'and when you've done I'll tell you which of the two I think you.'

'Lady Constance—Conny they called her—was exceedingly pretty, but that was nothing; full of life and spirits, but that was nothing—she was a little witch, irrepresible, irresistible at last. I know she began, unlike the rest of her family, by treating me as a dependent, an inferior, ignoring me as she would a servant or a shop-boy, as though, for her, I were not a man with free will, but a thing set there to do her pleasure. This behaviour half amused, half nettled me. I thought her a child.

But I wanted a mild revenge. I began to make a show of the deepest admiration for her. This had the effect of softening her manner surprisingly; and it dawned upon me that it was my apparent indifference before which had set her against me. You see, she was in fact anything but a child. Very soon there was no pretence about my devotion, and she abandoned her heart entirely to a romantic infatuation,' he said modestly, 'for a man whom she knew her parents—the best and at the same time the most exclusive people in the world—would never think of allowing her to marry. All our communications were in secret. She would have eloped with me then if I had asked it. I said we must wait. My position would improve. Her affection, and the thousand little winning ways she had of showing it, had had the effect of making me adore her passionately at last. In accepting her attachment I had also become dependent on it; and her heart never wavered till she had made mine her slave.

'But selfishness was the ground-stone of her nature, and all this surface-growth of devotion was to melt away. You can guess the rest. First I, who had been all in all to her, became second to herself; then other people stepped between us. I grew jealous. We had quarrels—reconciliations. This state of things drove me nearly mad at last. Suddenly our correspondence was discovered. Lord and Lady X. were, of course, highly indignant. But I did not care to plead my cause, for I had reason for more than suspecting my little lady of connivance in the matter, as a convenient means of putting the onus of the break upon her parents. And two months before she had been enchanting me with

as passionate vows and fond words as lovers ever spoke! That cured me—cured me of ever again—forgive me, Miss Noel—trusting a woman's earnest. Shall I go on?

'O, pray go on,' said I; 'your story is even more interesting than your lecture on the three periods of Grecian art.'

'I felt sickened with fashionable life—the wish to naturalise myself in its foreign element was dead—and I thought I would throw myself into a little Bohemianism for a change. It was in those days that I made the acquaintance of your friend Miss Severn.'

He paused. I supplied the blank: understood the story better now, and how the sins of Conny had inevitably been visited on Eva's head.

'After two years of busy idleness I found I had spent all my money without having learnt how to make it. I had still my family to fall back upon, and determined to yield to their wishes and renounce the brush. The prodigal is always welcome, and treated much better than he deserves, so I had no fear. Then came the sudden smash that utterly changed my relation to the world. My father, after some previous losses of fortune, of which I had been ignorant, was entirely ruined in a commercial crisis. He had been ailing at the time, and died a few months after from the effects of the shock. Then, almost without warning, I, who had never before had the need to struggle, or to ask for anything or put myself out for anybody, found I was penniless, in debt, with a mother and sisters to support. I took what I thought the best chance open to me—set to earn my living and theirs by my pen.'

'I never wish my bitterest enemy anything worse,' he resumed vehemently: 'to see his

old friends drop off, or at best meet him with galling patronage; to have to curry favour where earning will never win it; to prostitute his abilities to the service of gods that pay; to live among ever-increasing temptations to put his scruples, his higher aims—not to say his honesty—in his pocket—'

'Men have passed even that ordeal,' I observed, 'and yet not swerved from their standard.'

'Fewer than you think,' he replied trenchantly. 'As for me, I grew desperate, cynical,—felt all the saving strength in me played out; shut my eyes not to see how I was being dragged down. I was very fast sinking into the mire from which no man ever gets up quite intact again, when a happy chance extricated me. There was my lucky star once more. The change all came about before I knew why. But looking back now, I see and acknowledge that the steady good fortune that has been mine these six years I owe entirely to a single friend—Jasper Gerard.'

'Jasper Gerard?'

'That was his name. A man I had known slightly before our reverse. We met again by accident; but after that he looked me up. And if ever a fellow did do another a good turn—Really, Miss Noel, if you stare so hard at that Gorgon's head you will turn to stone yourself presently.'

'Never mind,' said I heedlessly.

'What did he do?'

'O, a mere trifle at first—got me to come and help him to catalogue the books in his father's library; then put me in the way of obtaining some remunerative literary work, more congenial than the hack-writing I was then bound to. He was very young, but already had a good deal of personal influence with influential people. We became friends. I think it

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was working with him, fraternising with him, seeing and catching his sound interest in things, that first made me see life straight again. Gerard was rich; and the chances are that, if I had always been poor myself, I should only have envied him now—grudged him his power to be generous. But I had been rich too, and knew that, though thousands a year may or may not spoil a first-rate nature, they can never make one. At his age, if I had seen a fellow like myself going to the devil I should, in the first place, never have taken much trouble to stop him; and if I had, my pains would probably have been thrown away.

'Thanks to him, I recovered the spirit to begin the battle again. My family were now rather better off, and I had only myself to think of. But my health, which I had done my best to spoil during those worst years, threatened me with a serious break-down. Then Gerard persuaded me to come abroad with him. We saw Italy, Greece, the East.' And he paused.

'Of course no man cares to be dependent on another,' he resumed, 'and I worked pretty hard then, even while we were on the wing. Still, travelling with Gerard, there was no anxiety. He had friends everywhere, and in important quarters. All this brought me to the front again. I had now only to make good my claim to keep my place there in my own right. It is easy to deserve a thing after you have got it. Now I might have gone on fretting, wasting, exhausting my energies till they were worn out, before I so much as found an opening, but for one man who stopped me when I was half-way down the hill. He was no saint either; but the whole calendar could never be worth what he

was, to me. What did he do it for? I wasn't even his friend, in the first instance. Did he even know what he was doing? For don't you think, Miss Noel, there are certain natures going about whose mere companionship recruits and elevates, like Shakespeare and the classics?'

'So Mr. Gerard was one of these?'

'There are services of a kind a man can never repay,' he continued. 'He always made light of them himself—seemed surprised at any allusion. We parted at last. I had obtained through his introduction an appointment abroad that suited me exactly, and allowed me the leisure I wanted, to study and write. Perhaps it may have given him some pleasure since to hear of my name in more or less honourable places, where it would hardly have stood but for him.'

After a pause he resumed in altogether a different tone:

'I saw him again last year in Rome, but he was married.'

'O, yes,' I rejoined; 'and I must tell you that he married a girl I knew very well as a child.'

'Indeed! You know Mrs. Jasper Gerard?'

'Exactly. Very handsome, is she not?'

'Ye-es,' he said, with a wry face. 'But it staggered me, I confess; and even now I cannot swallow it. That Jasper Gerard should end by taking for the wife of his bosom such an out-and-out daughter of Philistia—'

'Mr. Grey,' I rejoined hastily, 'Mr. Gerard was only marrying into his mother's people.'

'Miss Noel, for shame! You know as well as I do that Philistinism is a creed, not a birth-right, or you and I should be Philistines ourselves. But what is the matter with your Medusa! Those snake-locks are all awry.'

'Tell me,' said I, trying hard to smother the eagerness I feared must burn through my words; 'Mrs. Gerard and her husband—how did they seem?'

'O, happy, fond of each other still, and all that,' he replied carelessly; 'but that can't last, you know.'

I looked up at him, and laughed, with a pang of pleasure.

'One more question,' I asked, rising to collect my crayons as I spoke. 'You must forgive my curiosity. What has become of Conny?'

'Conny? O, she married, not long after my departure from the scene, a young lord on the turf, her cousin, a fool who plays prince consort to her queen quite meekly, I'm told. But don't go,' he said, detaining me; 'why are you in such a hurry?'

'But only look at my Medusa; she is spoilt.'

'Let me do her for you,' he said.

In a few minutes his quick hand and practised eye had accomplished the sketch—a vivid likeness of the original—which he presented to me, saying,

'And now that you have my history, Miss Noel, tell me frankly what you think of me. I wanted you to know me as I am, and the ups and downs I have passed through. I wanted you to know that I have not always been good friends with society, as you see me now. You can't call me an adventurer or an impostor,' he added playfully. 'I have told you exactly how the good metal in me was tried and worn away, I may say corroded.'

'Till Mr. Gerard cured you,' said I.

'There was one thing he couldn't cure,' said Mr. Grey, speaking low, and stooping down to look into my face, with a half-smile.

'And that was?'

'The contempt for women that Conny had taught me.'

'You are very ungrateful,' said I; for I was fond of teasing him about his female worshippers. 'Mr. Grey, if you had happened to die this winter, you would certainly have had a monument raised to you at Ludwigsheim, like that of Frauenlob the Minnesinger, representing all the ladies weeping inconsolably round your bier.'

He laughed and shook his head.

'If I *am* cured, it is not their doing either that has worked the miracle.'

'Ah, to be sure; that was reserved for Mrs. Meredith,' said I cheerfully.

'Mrs. Meredith! What on earth do you mean?'

'She, or her cousin Charlotte.'

His countenance changed, and he said, speaking fast and low,

'Not her, nor any one but you. Listen one moment more. You have not heard my confession to the end yet.'

His light hand touched my shoulder; his keen hazel eyes, as mesmeric in their way as Medusa's, brightened eagerly, and he continued:

'For you I would unsay all the cynical things I ever said. For you I could forgive Conny—*thank* her—that she and her treachery set me free. You are like her in the face, but it is another soul that looks out of your eyes. You are the reality of which she was the false reflection. *Your* earnest I could trust.'

Was it Albert Grey speaking, he of whom Sophie had so confidently asserted that she knew, and he knew, that he must ever remain fancy free? I felt myself flushing and trembling a little. The strong will and wakeful mind of that man were not without their power to perplex and bewilder mine.

'I know what you mean about

Mrs. Meredith,' he said, 'and the pretty little cousin she wants me to marry. But even she doesn't ask me to lose my heart to Charlotte. And I care for no living woman's but yours.'

Averting my face to escape his look, I met the cold frozen stare of the Medusa. She seemed to be laughing at us. I turned back to him.

'Ask me for anything, but not for love. I should give you a stone. Once, when I was asleep, or dreaming, Medusa came and looked at me, and that was what happened,' I said, and laughed.

Again his bright incisive eyes sought mine, urgently straining, as it were, to master my volition by the force of the spirit within. For the first time I met their gaze without flinching. Medusa smiled triumphant above us as I concluded,

'For this once, believe me, you may trust a woman's earnest.'

When, that night, I related to Eva all that had passed, she confessed that, cured herself of her old love by his indifference, she had for long been cherishing secret visions of seeing me become Mrs. Albert Grey. My resolution astonished, my shrinking puzzled her. I had always been the first to praise his charm, his talents, his penetration, his tact, and so forth.

'He is of course perfectly unlike Mr. Gerard,' she hazarded. 'I have never seen two men, both so nice and so clever, and yet so different in every other possible way. But I used to fancy that for that very reason you might perhaps have—'

'You were making a great mistake,' I broke in. 'Will you never know me, Eva? You thought there was a chance of my being taken by his opposite, because

it would remind me least, and might have good points he had not. Child, I see a trace, a shadow of his type from time to time, and it draws me like a magnet. There was a friend of the Merediths with a voice like his—the greatest bore, the man was—yet I liked nothing so well as to talk to him the whole evening long. You may laugh, if you choose. I don't tell it you as a fine thing—certainly not as a wise thing—but as a fact. There is a boy who fills the buckets at the Brunnen in the court here, who has something of Jasper in his face. Often and often I wait at the window just to see him come and go. The colour of his hair, his intonation, his tricks in speaking, no matter where I meet them—in a labourer or a grand duke, a stranger or a friend—will give me a feeling you can never understand; and one beside which everything that I could ever feel for Albert Grey, had he ten times his own perfections, would seem stone cold and dead.'

By a fortunate accident, Eva and I, by staying so long in the sculpture-gallery, had caught bad colds, which served as an excuse for absenting ourselves from Mrs. Meredith's evenings for a week or two after this. If she had been on the *qui vive*, Mr. Grey soon lulled her suspicions by renewing his attentions to Lolotte, this time very pointedly. The girl only asked to be won; there was no excuse for prolonging the chapter. Betrothal and bridal followed speedily in the spring; so speedily, that sometimes I could doubt the reality of that scene among the marbles, but that I have kept Lolotte's lover's sketch of the Medusa in *memoriam* of the episode that ended then and there.

(To be continued.)

AN AFTERNOON AT A PEKIN THEATRE.

THE announcement that a famous troupe of Chinese comedians were to give a performance of unusual brilliancy, and the recommendations of Professor Li, an accomplished amateur of the dramatic art, for me on no account to allow the opportunity to slip, led to my paying a visit to the principal theatre of Peking. I had already seen the *Palan Flower* snatched away performed at Shanghai, but this was a piece written in the Soochow dialect, and some of the parts had been sustained by women, a thing contrary to law since the Emperor Tchien Loung had raised an actress to the dignity of an imperial concubine, and now only tolerated in the treaty ports.

The Peking theatre is a large square building, one side of which is occupied by the stage, while running round the other three are wooden galleries. I took my place at a table in one of these, in company with my friend the Professor, and sipped a cup of unsweetened tea handed me by the servants, while the venerable Li regaled himself with dried watermelon seeds and Tientsin grapes. There were no females present, as at Shanghai and Canton, where the fair sex, attired in gossamer silks or furs, according to the season of the year, and with their hair adorned with natural flowers, lean indolently against a couple of female servants who carry their pipes and fans. But young apprentice actors, recalling our 'Children of the Revels' of a former century, kept passing from table to table, offering pipes to the worthy tradesmen who formed a large

proportion of the audience, or drinking with them a cup of hot Chao-Chin wine. In their elegant theatrical costume—wide crimson trousers, large hanging sleeves of bright blue, and a couple of long peacock's feathers waving like antennae on either side of their gilt head-dresses—they resembled huge bright-coloured beetles. From the habit of acting, their gait, attitudes, and gestures had something measured and affected; still they were by no means ungraceful. All these youths, I was informed, had received a distinguished literary education.

A cacophonous overture, chiefly sustained by continuously thundering gongs and shrieking fiddles, mingled with the doleful notes of glass trumpets and bamboo flutes, and the strongly marked rhythm of castanets and tambourine, came to an end, and the performance commenced. The first piece, according to a written programme, sold like our own throughout the house, was an historic opera, or drama intended to be sung, entitled, *Ta tchin tche*, or the *Golden Branch beaten*, which in the language of every-day life means the 'Emperor's Daughter thrashed.' After a procession of eunuchs, uttering feminine cries, the Emperor, wearing a robe embroidered with precious stones, and with a long white beard, made his appearance, and softly sang, 'The golden crow appears in the east, the jade rabbit has sunk towards the west, the bell of the brilliant sun has sounded thrice;' all of which simply meant that the sun had

risen, the moon had set, and the Emperor had left his private apartments, an event sufficiently important to be notified to all the world by three strokes of a bell.

Still singing, the sovereign continued to relate the troubles of his reign: how a dangerous revolt headed by An Lou Chan, the lover of his concubine, Tang kouei, had only been quelled after superhuman efforts by his general Couodze In. 'I am now happy,' he chants in conclusion, 'for the earth is tranquil, the sea calm, the river beautiful, and the Fong Houang' (the king of the birds) 'is about to descend;' an incident which only occurs when the sovereign is virtuous, as in the case of the Emperor Kang Shi.

The Empress now arrives, and thus announces her coming: 'I have left the Radiant Sun, and I come to the Golden Palace to approach the Ten Thousand Years;' which, stripped of all hyperbole, signifies, 'I have come from my chamber to the throne-room to see the Emperor.' The latter inquires the reason of this visit; and the lady replies, 'Your rapid courser,' that is, the Emperor's son-in-law, 'has dared, for I know not what reason, to brutally strike our daughter.' The daughter here introduced upon the scene relates the circumstances of the insult. 'He returned to the palace intoxicated,' remarks she, 'and quarrelled with me, saying that it was his father and he who drove away the rebels and restored you to your throne. I answered nothing; at which he became furious and struck the Golden Branch, calling me a girl who does not know how to blush, an idiot who puts off new clothes to put on old ones. Moreover, he wanted me, a jade leaf of the Golden Branch, to kotow before my mother-in-law.' The Empress, who in her humility affects the

title of concubine, joins her daughter in demanding vengeance for the outrage; and on the Emperor desiring them both to retire, assuring them that justice shall be done, the young lady admonishingly warbles as she makes her exit, 'If you do not have him decapitated, the jade leaf of the Golden Branch will not feel satisfied.'

The Emperor administers to her a mild reproof, and then sings aloud to his attendants, 'Eunuchs, your Emperor commands you to introduce my imperial elder brother Couodze In.' The injunction is at once obeyed, and Couodze In slowly advances up the stage, accompanied by his son Couo Ai, who, bound with cords, is thus rebuked by him: 'Little slave, your act was that of a madman. The Emperor loved you as he loved his daughter. Whatever induced you to get intoxicated and beat her? In a few seconds your head will fall. Alas, I am very old, and my garments will be stained with blood.' To which the young man responds somewhat chirpily, 'My father, no more of these lachrymose lamentations. She is the daughter of the Emperor, it is true, but after all she is my wife. I will prostrate myself before my sovereign, who will hardly order me to be flayed alive.'

By this time they have arrived in presence of the Emperor, who addresses Couodze In with much condescension. 'You alone restored me my kingdom. I am Emperor, and you are only a mandarin; still I will not permit you to kneel before me. Eunuchs, bring a gilt arm-chair. The Emperor and the mandarin are about to discuss affairs of state.' Here Couo Ai makes his presence known by exclaiming that his bonds hurt him; whereupon the Emperor de-

mands, 'Who is the mandarin's son that is bound outside the door? Answer me, my elder brother.' The father sings in response, 'It is my son Couo Ai, who in a regrettable state of inebriation struck your daughter without any cause. I have brought him here to receive his punishment—to have, in fact, his head cut off.'

'Gently,' sings the indulgent Emperor; 'elder brother, you are going a little too far. Couo Ai is a very young man, and my daughter a very young woman. An old proverb says that however wise a mandarin may be it is very difficult for him to rule his household. In my opinion Couo Ai should not be punished. Unfasten his bonds, eunuchs, and replace his mourning garments by a court dress.' At this the father overwhelms the Emperor with his thanks, while the son proceeds to explain how the unfortunate affair arose. 'My wife,' says he, 'refused to prostrate herself before my father on his birthday, although my brothers and their wives did so without exception.' 'It is well,' exclaims the monarch; 'you show proper filial respect.' Thereupon, not only does the Emperor abstain from punishing his son-in-law, but, out of gratitude for the services rendered by the latter, presents him with a scarlet robe embroidered over with golden dragons, a tablet commemorative of his heroism and his filial virtues, to be hung up in his hall of reception, and a sword of justice with which he is privileged to decapitate any culprit without previously obtaining the imperial sanction.

The Golden Branch is now sent for, and to her great astonishment finds herself admonished in this fashion: 'In not going and prostrating yourself before your father-in-law you have failed in your duty towards the Emperor, your

parents, and your husband. I give you a cup of precious wine, which you shall offer to your father-in-law at his palace, as a token of repentance. In future do not come here unless I send for you.' After this display of pretended indignation, the sovereign musingly remarks, 'Couo Ai deserved punishment, but could I make my daughter a widow? Not only have I refrained from punishing him, but I have given him presents in acknowledgment of the heroism which he and his father displayed in defence of my dynasty.'

A warlike drama followed. Processions of 'supers' with banners of different colours, according to the party they belonged to, passed up and down the stage. Princes magnificently arrayed in gilt cuirasses and velvet boots, and accoutred with huge quivers and broad stiff belts, and with their faces painted red and black, kept blowing into their beards to indicate the violence of their anger, insulted each other in song, and met in single combat with mace and lance. They bounded in turn like tigers or acrobats over their adversary's head, and broke off in the midst of their encounters to drink a cup of tea brought to them by a servant in ordinary modern attire. One of them suddenly gave vent to a shrill cry, like the crow of a cock, and then the audience, usually so apathetic, warmed as it were by these various feats, the glitter of lances and battle-axes, and the waving of multitudinous banners, began to exclaim, 'Hao, hao!' in sign of approbation.

The actors, despite their strange and conventional style, are not devoid of talent, but the absence of scenery and properties necessitates having recourse to some singular manoeuvres. If a warrior

wishes to mount his steed, he takes several strides in a majestic manner, lifts his right foot from the ground, and swings his leg over the back of an imaginary animal. The audience understand from this that he is now in the saddle, and when he switches the air with a stick they know that he has started off full gallop. A severe-looking old man, broken down by age, advances, holding in either hand a square of canvas on which is painted a wheel. This signifies that the Emperor has arrived in his chariot. An upright mandarin, unappreciated by his sovereign, flies in desperation to a wood. His mother follows him, carrying in front of her a canvas representation of a rock, which, after having expressed her sorrows in song, she deposits in a corner. The son, on his part, resolves to set fire to the forest, and to avenge himself in Chinese fashion by committing suicide. A resinous torch is brought to him, and he lights it, thereby giving the audience to understand that the forest is on fire. He next brandishes the torch and blackens his face with the smoke. The mother utters shrieks; but disregarding them he opens his mouth, bites as it were at the flame, and falls, supposed to be reduced to something like a cinder.

For the moderate outlay of from six to seven taos—that is to say, from three shillings to three shillings and sixpence—any spectator is privileged to have the programme of the entertainment varied according to his fancy. Profiting by this circumstance, after three noisy spectacular entertainments I was able to witness a 'shiao shi,' that is, a realistic representation of an ordinary incident of modern life, entitled, *Fou Pang tseung tchouo*, or *Fou Pang lets fall his Bracelet*. The charac-

ters were four in number—Mrs. Shen, the widow of Mr. Soun; Miss Soun-yu-tchiao, her daughter; Mr. Fou Pang, a young bachelor; and an old woman, who acts as matrimonial agent.

At the commencement of the piece the young lady is discovered soliloquising on the loneliness of her condition: 'Sad, with frowning brows, I embroider to kill time; with my long sleeves I wipe away my tears; always, with me, new griefs succeed to old ones. I raise the lattice, and in melancholy mood regard the chrysanthemums. I have not courage to dress my hair near the window. I complain of my sad lot and am vexed with myself; the destiny of all pretty women, it is well known, is unhappy. My name is Soun-yu-tchiao; my father is dead, my mother remains a widow; our fortune is slender. I am already eighteen, and have not yet a husband. My mother is absorbed in her devotions; morning and night she prostrates herself before Buddha, burns perfumes and neglects the household affairs, so that I am not likely to see the day of my happiness approach. When I think of this my tears flow like the rain of an autumn night, and each drop is a real grief to me.'

The Chinese women, as a rule, are very superstitious, and several times a day they burn in honour of Buddha, of the genii of the kitchen, and of the wicked spirits, sham ingots of gold and silver paper, regarding the value of which these deities, if deceived at all, must certainly be somewhat sceptical. They are continually running to the pagodas to consult the bonzes respecting their own healths and that of their children, when the priests of Buddha, instead of prescribing castor-oil or quinine, order a certain number of little bits of paper, inscribed over

with cabalistic characters, to be burnt before an idol, and the ashes swallowed by the patient in a cup of tea. Mrs. Shen, who now makes her appearance, is a woman of this class, and observes that those who wish to escape from the tumult of the world must put all ordinary preoccupations aside. To her daughter's question as to why she has risen so early, she replies: 'I heard of the arrival of a pilgrim bonze, and have been listening to his explanation of the sacred books.' The daughter sneers at the bonze in question; which greatly irritates the mother, who threatens her with the enduring punishment meted out to the wicked, and orders her to go on with her embroidery until she returns at mid-day to prepare their repast.

Left alone, the young girl resumes her soliloquy, alternately singing and speaking. After lamenting her uncertain future, she notices that the door of the house is closed; why should she not set it ajar and amuse herself a little? 'Quite alone, shut up in the inner room! quite alone! alone I sit, alone I lie down! Poor pretty women, whose lot is so hard! Much sadness, many tears! I know well enough that it is not proper for a young girl like me to stand at the door, but it is only for a moment, and nothing extraordinary is likely to happen.' At this juncture the long-wished-for lover makes his appearance, gaily warbling, 'I am taking a stroll merely to amuse myself, and will pass before the door of the Soun family. I observe a charming creature as beautiful as Tchangho' (the divine beauty inhabiting the moon); 'I perceive her pretty face, so tender that a breath of air, a filip from a feather, would lacerate it. At the sight of her I am bereft alike of

soul and senses.' Here the young gentleman gives over singing, and soliloquises also: 'Attention! this beautiful person must be the daughter of the widow Shen; her physical charms excel those of all other women in the empire. I am Fou Pang. To make her my wife is the object of my ardent desire. I should like to speak to her, but unhappily the rites forbid a young girl to converse with a young man.' At this point he breaks out into song again: 'Although we are neighbours I have not the right to infringe the rules of decorum. I dare not offend in any such manner. Besides, there is nothing in common between us. I am a man of family, I have the pride of my rank; I should be afraid of the ridicule and contempt of the people of the neighbourhood; I hesitate, and yet my heart is on fire. Shall I let slip so favourable an opportunity? I will pretend to lose something: it is a good mode of arriving at a marriage.'

Fou Pang, with a lover's indifference to the rites, determines upon addressing the damsel, and the following dialogue ensues: 'A question, miss, if you please; is this Mother Soun's?' 'Yes, sir, it is.' 'Another question, if you please; is Mother Soun at home?' 'My mother, sir, is not at home.' 'Ah, you are Miss Soun then? I salute you.' 'Sir, I salute you in return. A question, sir. What is your lofty name, what are your rich forenames? what is the reason you ask me if my mother is at home?' 'My name, miss, is Fou, my forename is Pang, my fancy-name is Yun Tchang. I inhabit the lane in front. I have heard that in your residence you breed good cocks; I wish to buy a couple.' 'We have, indeed, some cocks, sir, but I cannot sell them in my mother's absence.'

'Since, miss, your noble mother is not at home, I will buy them elsewhere.' 'As you please, sir,' replies the young girl; to which Fou Pang politely rejoins, 'Miss, I take the liberty to retire.'

As the amorous swain is leaving, he remarks to himself, 'I will loosen my bracelet, which I wish to be the gage of our betrothal. I will let it fall from my sleeve while bowing. If she picks it up there are nine chances to ten that the marriage will take place. I will go at once and ask my mother to find a third party to arrange the affair.'

The young lady now sings: 'On leaving me he had a smiling air; he saluted me, and intentionally let fall a jade bracelet. Why should not we become husband and wife? why should we not imitate the couples of mandarin ducks that sport among the water-lilies? I should then have some one to lean upon until my death.'

The third person, who is indispensable to all Chinese marriages, here appears in the form of an old woman, who had seen the bracelet fall from a distance: 'These two young people,' observes she, 'smile lovingly at each other; their passion is warm, and only an intermediary is needed to arrange the marriage. The desire of gain is aroused in my old body, and why should I not secure the price of this mediation? I am the mother of the pork-butcher Leou Piao; my name is Hou Che, the go-between. An instant ago I perceived Mr. Fou in company of Miss Shen; their glances met, and on parting he let fall a bracelet. The brokerage of this business shall not escape me.'

It is now the young lady's turn, and she proceeds to warble: 'I gaze at this bracelet of jade by the light of the lamp. I do nothing but sigh; my tears fall one by one like pearls.' Mrs. Hou Che here interposes: 'Miss, console yourself; I will bring him to you, and you will converse together at your ease. Will that suit you?' 'Alas, madam,' replies the young girl, 'we are very poor; I have no gage to send him.' To which the old woman rejoins: 'In exchange for the bracelet a pair of embroidered slippers will do very well.' On the damsel handing these to her she promises to bring an answer within three days' time, which calls forth endless protestations of gratitude on the part of the love-sick Soun-yut-chiao. 'Fix the day when you will bring him to me,' exclaims she; 'it will be a good action, and I will be as grateful to you as to the mother who gave me birth. It is useless to ask me if I desire this marriage. I could live happily with him even as his second wife, and die peaceably with closed eyes.' The old woman bids her be easy in her mind, to go on with her embroidery, and keep the house-door shut until the happy moment arrives. 'I turn up the wick of the lamp and I await the phoenix,' replies the young girl; to which the old woman rejoins: 'That is my business; I undertake to bring the butterfly into the garden.' 'Perfect!' exclaims Miss Soun; 'a pretty butterfly will enter the garden.' With which little speech this trifling sketch of modern Chinese manners comes to an abrupt close.

THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.

CHAPTER XXL

LOUIS DE ROCHEMAR.

WHILE Mme. de Valmont was waiting in the little Parisian salon for its owner, who did not seem inclined to appear, Mme. de Saint-Hilaire and Agnes were just arriving at Rochemar.

Agnes almost forgot her own consternation and shame at Frank's behaviour in the admiration she felt for her aunt. Not one harsh word had passed the old Comtesse's lips against Marie, the child she had brought up; whose weak and delicate youth she had tended so carefully, whose happiness she had studied, who had been for so long the one object of all her thoughts and doings. After the first anxiety, when the truth was too plain to all eyes, she was very silent; she poured out no blame on any one. When the old shepherdess came, with tears running down her withered cheeks, and penitently confessed the meeting in the avenue, begging her mistress to forgive her for her stupid silence, the Comtesse looked at her sadly, and stretched out a kind hand.

'Do not distress yourself, *ma pauvre femme*. It is not your fault. They would have escaped in spite of you. Do not spread this news about the country,' she added, addressing the group of servants. 'Now go to bed, all of you. Good-night, Agnes.'

On Wednesday she was down early as usual. When Agnes joined her she was just come in from the yard, and was standing

in the salon with her hat on, and her stick in her hand. Peloton sat at a little distance, looking at her. He might well look, Agnes thought with a sudden shiver, as she caught the first glimpse of her aunt in an opposite mirror. There was a stoop in her upright shoulders, the hand that held her stick trembled, and her usually placid face looked worn and haggard. Sleep had been far from her eyes that night, it was plain enough.

'Bon jour, *ma chère*,' she said, turning quietly to Agnes as she came in. 'Will you put on your hat, and go with me by and by to Rochemar?'

'Yes, *ma tante*,' said Agnes faintly. Then she came forward, took the old woman's hand and kissed it, and looked up into her face through suddenly falling tears. 'I don't know how you can speak so kindly to me, or how you can endure the sight of me, when my brother has been so wicked, so ungrateful—'

'I like justice myself,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'This affair makes you unhappy enough, I can see that. You are not responsible for other people's doings. I was a foolish old woman, it seems, to trust Frank as I did; but who would have imagined—you had no suspicion?'

'Suspicion that he dreamed of this? No, indeed. I knew that he was very fond of Marie, and that her engagement was a trouble to him.'

'So did I. He confessed all that to me last Sunday. What falseness! I was utterly de-

ceived. A character, too, that seemed so open and so gentle. Now if it had been John! There is something odd and reserved about John.

'Ah!' cried Agnes, 'indeed you do not understand them. Johnny has an absent manner, but he is truthful, sincere, unselfish, honourable. Poor Frank—one cannot wish to blame him any more, but he has always had a way of thinking of himself first. He never cared very much how he got what he wanted, or what pain he gave; but this is beyond anything I ever dreamed of.'

'Not much chance of happiness for my poor Marie, with a temper like that,' said the Comtesse. 'She has chosen a sad fate for herself. With her peculiar character, it was necessary that her husband should be very amiable—patient, unselfish, compassionate. I knew that very well, and I had found a person who had all these virtues. Poor Louis! They are happy at Rochemar this morning. I cannot wait for them to come here. I must go and tell them the heart-breaking news.'

So in the course of that sad morning they climbed the hill to Rochemar. As Auguste stopped his horses under the high arched entrance of the cour d'honneur, somebody in a velvet coat came forward into the gateway. A short dark-complexioned young man, with a grave countenance, and a black moustache, and small pointed beard.

'There is the Marquis. Ah, que c'est navrant!' sighed Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

M. de Rochemar came up and opened the carriage-door, and offered his hand to help her out, his face suddenly brightened and transfigured by a very sweet smile.

'Here I am returned at last,

madame,' he said. 'I hope to pay you a visit this afternoon.'

'We will talk of that presently,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'I am charmed to see you looking so well. Let me present you to my niece, Mdle. Wyatt.'

'Bon jour, mademoiselle,' said the Marquis, bowing. 'I have heard of you already from my mother, and of messieurs vos frères too. I hope to make their acquaintance.'

'Merci, monsieur,' said Agnes. 'I am afraid we are all going away at once.'

'Ah, I hope not,' said M. de Rochemar; and then he offered his arm to Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, who was walking very feebly into the house. 'May I ask for mademoiselle your granddaughter?' Agnes heard him say, as she followed him.

'No. I have something to tell you,—but your mother must hear it too.'

'Dear madame, you frighten me.'

'Have a moment's patience.'

M. Louis said no more, but took her into the salon, where his mother appeared immediately, hurrying to meet them with delighted exclamations.

'But where is our angel? Where is the Flower of Anjou? You have not had the heart to leave her behind!'

'You ask me where she is, madame,' said the old Comtesse, supporting herself on her stick, and leaning with the other hand on the back of a chair. For a moment she seemed unable to say anything more; she looked from Louis to his mother, and shook her head.

There was something in her manner so solemn and so terrible that the lively Mme. de Rochemar stood for an instant as if she was turned to stone. Then she

glanced at Agnes, and shrieked, striking her hands together,

'Ah, mon Dieu! What has happened? Mademoiselle is crying. Is she dead, then, our angel!'

'Madame, I entreat of you, tell us the worst at once,' said M. de Rochemar. As he spoke he went up to his mother and took both her trembling hands in his. 'Calm yourself, ma mère.'

'Listen, then,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'She is gone. She left Les Sapinières last night, and Heaven knows that I would give all I have to be able to tell you where she is now. We have lost her.'

'Did she go alone?' said M. de Rochemar, turning very pale, but stilling his mother with an affectionate pressure of her hands.

'No. With her English cousin, Frank Wyatt. Agnes, mon enfant,' said the old woman, turning suddenly to her niece, 'this is painful for you. I should not have brought you here. But your brother's fault is not yours.'

'No, indeed,' said M. de Rochemar. 'But I am grieved and shocked to think that—'

'Ah, I cannot bear it!' cried his mother, throwing herself into a seat, and bursting out into a passion of hysterical crying.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, still leaning on the back of a chair, stooped forward and covered her face with her hand.

'Come with me, ma très-chère,' said Louis tenderly, putting his arm round his mother. 'Pardon, madame; I will come back to you in a moment.'

'Ma tante, would not you sit down?' said Agnes, when the mother and son had left the room together.

'No,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

But when the Marquis returned he brought forward an

armchair, and gently insisted on her taking it. Agnes was obliged to do the same, and then he stood still for a moment in front of them. Agnes could see that he was very much moved, and hardly knew whether she felt more pity or admiration for this man, whose joyful hopes had met with such a downfall, and who could yet command himself, putting aside all appearance of resentment, or even surprise, and be ready with steady tenderness to dry a weak woman's tears.

'Have we been mistaken all this time?' he said. 'My mother gave me to understand that Mdlle. Marie accepted me of her own free will. Was not that the case, madame?'

'I assure you that it was,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'This terrible thing is as great a surprise to me as to you.'

'And the English gentleman,' said M. de Rochemar, with an apologetic glance at Agnes—'did she know him before? Was it perhaps a long hopeless attachment?'

'No, indeed. She never saw him till after she was engaged to you. I had the greatest confidence in him—so had every one else. It must be confessed that they were much together, and that he occupied himself a great deal with her amusement. But that, you know, in England, is the way with young people, especially if they are related to each other. Still I should have been more watchful. It was my fault.'

'I fear that cette pauvre demoiselle must have suffered very much before she felt herself driven to such a step,' said M. de Rochemar. 'Had I only been here sooner I might have seen it, and withdrawn myself. I would not have stood in the way of her happiness.'

'You are too generous,' said Mme de Saint-Hilaire. 'I can only hope that you may in time find a wife more worthy of you. I know that Marie has thrown away her happiness. There is no trust to be placed in a person who could do as Frank has done. He has lived in my house, won my confidence, and then stolen away my only treasure.'

'When did it happen?' said M. de Rochemar. 'Have you any idea where they are gone?'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire told him all the sad story, going through the circumstances slowly and emphatically. The Marquis sat down, frowning, and leaned his head on his hand.

'Ma tante,' said Agnes, suddenly coming forward, 'I believe it was all my fault. I might have prevented it.'

'How, my child?'

'Pardon, mademoiselle,' said Louis, looking up at her. 'It is most likely that no one could have prevented it.'

'But listen to me,' said Agnes. 'Frank told me one day, some time ago, about his affection for Marie, and that he believed she cared for him. I told him he ought to go away. He would not hear of that. I suppose I ought not to have held my tongue and let things take their course, as I did; but I trusted him. I was sorry for him; but, of course, I thought he was perfectly hopeless.'

'You acted quite naturally, my dear,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. 'I trusted him too, and did very much the same. When he spoke to me on Sunday, as I have told you, Louis, he offered to go away at once, if I thought it better. I begged him to stay. We have made a sad mess of it amongst us, but certainly I was the blindest and the most to

blame. The thought of being allied with you was a great happiness to me, and I am sorry indeed to give it up. You perhaps already feel that it is fortunate for you. It will not be long before my poor Marie finds out her mistake—deceived like all of us, but the most terribly of all. I had better not stay here,' she said, getting up. 'I should like to know how your mother is, and then my niece and I will return home. Is the carriage there?'

'Do not think of leaving us yet, I beg of you, madame,' said M. de Rochemar. 'We cannot remain in this state of miserable uncertainty. Surely you wish to know where Mdlle. Marie is gone, and what she is doing? I understand that you have not even any proof that she has left Carillon. When our friends leave us in this way, we cannot at once lose all interest in them.'

'That is true enough,' said the Comtesse wearily. 'But how are we to find out these things? I thought we could only wait for a letter. She is not so unnatural as to leave me long in suspense.'

'I hope not; but three or four days may pass before the letter comes. We must try and ascertain something in the mean while. We will make no public inquiries; but I have friends enough at Carillon to find out anything I want to know. Will you let me carry out my little plan?'

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire had sat down again, and was looking up wistfully into the grave face opposite her, darkened by the African sun, and now hiding all deep feeling under a quiet matter-of-fact expression. The Marquis was certainly a strong contrast to tall, graceful, refined-looking Frank Wyatt; yet there was a soldierly dignity about him, a real naturalness and unaffected honesty which

did not really lose in comparison with the careless easy openness of Frank. Art often beats Nature in these things, and it is only a connoisseur who can always distinguish between the copy and the original.

'Then what do you want me to do?' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire.

'I want you and mademoiselle your niece to stay here and take care of my mother, while I go to Carillon. My poor mother cannot be left alone.'

'I will do as you wish. But listen to me a moment. It is very wrong that you should do this. You ought to have nothing more to say to us. You have been treated in the most dreadful way by this girl, and you still care what becomes of her! Let somebody else take all this trouble. It is not your place.'

'Madame, I did not think you wished to give me up as a friend. Say nothing more about it, I beg. I have known Mdlle. Marie for many years, and I think no one has a better right to take an interest in her.'

Louis came forward, and kissed the old lady's hand; then he made a low bow to Agnes, and left the room without saying any more.

Mme. de Saint-Hilaire rocked herself backwards and forwards in her chair, and sighed deeply once or twice.

'Well, Agnes, what do you think of him?'

'Ma tante, there is something about him that makes one think of the old paladins.'

'You are right. We have not many such in the world now. He is like his father, who was the most chivalrous gentleman in France. Ah, Marie, thou little stupid one, what a parti hast thou thrown away!'

M. le Marquis de Rochemar muffled himself up in a large scarf, for the air was cold that October morning, jumped into his dog-cart, and drove off at a great pace. He had not a very clear idea of what he was going to do, but of one thing he was pretty sure—that he would succeed in finding out whether Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire and her English lover had left Carillon station; and if so, by what train.

CHAPTER XXII.

EN CACHETTE.

FRANK WYATT had made one great mistake, as the cleverest people sometimes do, perhaps fortunately for their less brilliant fellow-creatures. If he wished to keep his stolen prize, he should at all risks have carried it off with him at once. To leave Marie to her own reflections, shut up for so many hours in the Château de Carillon, deprived of the excitement of his presence, and with nothing to do but to wait and think things over, was about the most stupid thing he could have done.

She found herself almost imprisoned in a small cell-like room, where Mme. d'Yves, her hostess or gaoler, was constantly looking in upon her, with nods and glances and scraps of encouragement that jarred dreadfully on the little demoiselle. The first sign of reaction, which came on so early as Tuesday night, was a return of all her former prejudice against Mme. d'Yves and her black eyes. She hated her, and would hardly answer when she spoke to her, quite forgetting how grateful she ought to be for the ready good-nature and hospitality which had made her elopement such an easy

affair. Madame d'Yves remarked to her husband that she hoped M. Wyatt would be able to manage the young lady: she was quite beyond her.

Things got worse as the night went on. The wind howled round the old towers and turrets, the river splashed and gurgled, and Marie, wide awake with excitement, fancied all sorts of ghostly noises in the château, to which she was paying her first visit after such a strange fashion. She thought it was very wrong of Frank to bring her to such a place as this, and to leave her in the charge of a woman like Mme. d'Yves. Then came a flood of repentance. What had she been thinking of? How could she have done it? Cruel, wicked, ungrateful girl, to leave her poor grandmother in such terrible anxiety! What was her grandmother doing now? Not sleeping her own healthy peaceful sleep, Marie was quite sure. And then she pictured all the search to herself, the uncertainty, the hunting far and near, the crying and bewailing over the lost child. Ah! could that be the wind, that melancholy noise? it was like somebody crying. Marie crossed herself, and then suddenly felt that she had no right to do that, while she was deliberately committing this dreadful sin. She almost heard her grandmother calling, and then she got up and tried to open the door. It was locked, but she shook it, and cried, 'Grand'mère, grand'mère!' Only the moaning wind answered her: that sad cry could never reach her grandmother's anxious ears. There was nothing for it but to lie down again and cry very bitterly, so gradually sobbing herself into a sleep broken by dreams and sudden starts of terror.

In the morning Mme. d'Yves

unlocked the door herself and brought in a cup of coffee. She found Marie already dressed, and walking up and down the room like a captive creature, her face very pale, and her eyes hollow and worn.

'Bon jour, mademoiselle,' said Mme. d'Yves, who looked smart and agreeable in a rose-coloured peignoir trimmed with white lace. 'You have slept well, I hope. Tiens! you are dressed already. I wonder you troubled yourself to get up so early.'

'Thank you, madame,' said Marie. 'You are very good. I have not slept at all.'

'Indeed! what a pity! That was really unwise, mademoiselle, considering the journey that is before us. However, you must rest yourself during the day.'

Marie sighed. 'Why did you trouble yourself to do that, madame?' she said, pointing to the coffee.

'I thought I should like to see how my charge found herself this morning,' said Mme. d'Yves, showing her teeth in a cheerful smile. 'I do not wonder, myself, that you feel upset and disturbed. Such things don't happen every day, and they are seldom thoroughly pleasant at the time.'

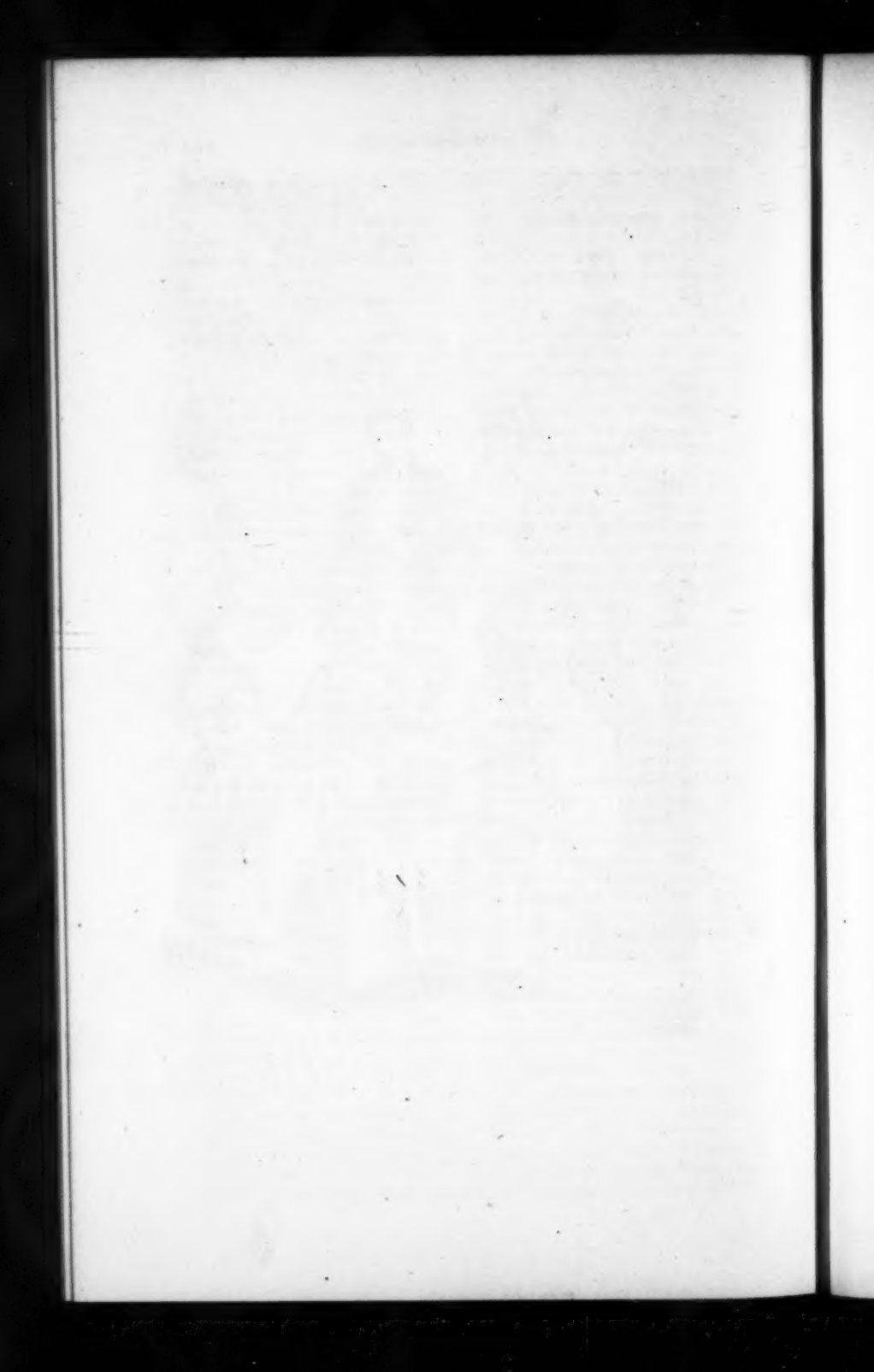
'I never went through anything half so dreadful,' said Marie; at which her hostess laughed.

'Allons, mademoiselle, you have not had much to do for yourself. No jumping out of the window, or riding twenty miles, or hiding in woods, or any of those difficulties that one expects on these occasions. Everything has been arranged for you easily enough. I will say for these English gentlemen that they are very considerate. If you had only heard the long discourses that M. Wyatt used to make to me on the subject. He was so unhappy, and I pitied him so much, poor



PRESENTATION OF THE WEDDING-GIFTS.

See THE DREAMLAND OF LOVE.



fellow, that I was obliged to help him. And I think I may say that we arranged the affair very cleverly between us.'

'You did indeed,' said Marie, but her tone of voice was anything but grateful.

'To be sure,' said Mme. d'Yves, 'we are not safely through with it yet. We have to get to Paris; but the worst part is over, now that you are with me. And once in Paris, let them search for you!'

'Ah, mon Dieu!' cried Marie, suddenly sitting down, and hiding her face in her hands.

Mme. d'Yves stood and looked at her, with her hands folded on her peignoir, till one or two long sobs shook the small stooping figure, and tears began to steal through the stiff slender fingers.

'Allons! voyons! what is there to cry about, mademoiselle? One would think everything was going wrong, and that you were to be taken back home and married against your will. It is a bad compliment to ce pauvre monsieur, who has gone off to Paris to prepare for you. Or perhaps it is that the time seems so long. Bien! I am very sorry, but we cannot possibly start till this evening. Not so many hours, after all. Have a little patience, and do not cry, ma petite. It is a pity to spoil your pretty eyes for no reason.'

In the course of her consolations Mme. d'Yves advanced quite close to Marie, and stooped over her, gently touching her soft dark hair. Marie started and shook off the touch, regaining her self-command with a sudden effort, and her hostess retreated several steps, staring at her. She was puzzled, not unnaturally, and perhaps resolved that this should be the last time she would give any help in the love affairs of a young lady of the noblesse.

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'Madame,' said Marie, standing up, 'do you really wish to be kind to me?'

'You ask me that, mademoiselle!' with an expressive shrug.

'Then will you send a message for me to my grandmother? It makes me miserable to think how anxious she must be. Just a few words, to tell her that I am safe and well, and that I will write to her from Paris. She will die of anxiety if she hears nothing.'

Mme. d'Yves screwed up her mouth, raised her eyebrows, and looked very grave.

'You should have thought of all that before, mademoiselle,' she said. 'As for sending a message, it is far too dangerous. I could not possibly do such a thing. Why, how should I get you away to Paris, if your grandmother knew you were here? She supposes that you are already hundreds of leagues away. Do not you see that your safety lies in the fact that no one suspects me? Be a little reasonable, je vous en prie.'

'I wish I had never done it,' said Marie. She stopped for a moment, and looked round at the narrow walls of her room with a sort of desperation. 'I am like a prisoner here. I cannot get out, or do anything I choose. What will become of me?'

'Mademoiselle,' said Mme. d'Yves, shaking her head, 'forgive me, but you are too impatient. I am sorry you find yourself so uncomfortable here, but it was part of the plan that you should be carefully hidden in my house for a night and a day. It was done to please you, and if you complain, it is of the fate that you have chosen for yourself. It is absurd for you to think of going out to-day. I gave my word to M. Wyatt that I would keep you safely, and I assure you that I

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mean to do it. Take my advice and be contented.'

Marie only answered by something between a sigh and an exclamation of rage. Mme. d'Yves left her to recover her temper, and went away to her husband with uplifted hands and eyes.

'Quel diable de caractère! That poor Englishman! I pity him with all my heart.'

It was two or three hours after this that Mme. de Valmont arrived at the château. When she had waited some minutes in the salon, listening to every sound, and moving uneasily from window to window, M. d'Yves came in, bowing, with his Panama hat in his hand. His wife would have the honour of attending madame instantly. In the mean while might he offer his services? Was there anything he could do? First of all, he begged that madame would sit down.

'It is not worth the trouble, monsieur,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'I have only a few words to say to Mme. d'Yves. I must apologise for such an early visit, but the affair is urgent.'

'And I cannot give you any assistance, madame?' said M. d'Yves.

'I suppose you have heard of the melancholy flight of Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire. Can you give me any news of her?'

M. d'Yves muttered an exclamation or two, shrugged his shoulders, and looked impenetrable.

'What news do you expect from me, madame? To be sure I have heard—so has the whole country, I suppose. Such things make a noise when they happen in good society.'

'I want to find out where the young lady is now. Can you give me no help, monsieur?'

'Help, madame! Nothing but conjecture. Let us see: can they

have reached England by this time? Or, perhaps, they might choose to go in some other direction. Poor Mme. de Saint-Hilaire! It must be a trial to her, but it will be a lesson never to trust the English.'

'The English are very good people,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Such men as this are the exception.'

'C'est possible. You have driven from Lauron this morning, madame? May I venture to offer you breakfast? It will be ready in a few minutes.'

'Merci bien, monsieur. We must return at once. Perhaps I need not trouble Mme. d'Yves this morning,' said the Marquise, glancing impatiently at the door.

'Pardon. She will be here in a moment. If you would have the goodness to sit down.'

Mme. de Valmont was not unwilling to wait, for she had a sort of idea that Mme. d'Yves might have some information that her husband either did not know or did not choose to tell, and that it would be a pity to go away without trying all sources.

So she condescended to take one of the elegant little chairs, and to admire some handsome china which M. d'Yves brought forward for her inspection, little thinking how near she was to the object of her inquiries.

All this time M. de Valmont and Johnny were waiting in the little courtyard. They stood talking in the inner archway, which led into the garden, still gay and bright in autumn beauty.

Johnny was interested by the curious old gray mass of buildings, and walked a few steps forward into the garden to have a better view of them.

'They could hide twenty people in these queer old towers,' he said to M. de Valmont.

'All sorts of strange things happened here in the Revolution,' said the Marquis. 'There are rooms that one cannot discover from outside. Look, do you see that little loophole close to the corner of the wall, half hidden by the gateway! I wonder what sort of place gets the light through that. Wait for me here. I must speak to the coachman;' and he walked off, while Johnny lingered and looked up with curious eyes at the rugged walls and turrets that rose above him.

Suddenly a little white thing fell on the pavement at his feet, and he stooped instinctively to pick it up. It was a piece of paper, wrapped round a brooch that Marie often wore, with a few almost illegible words scribbled on it: 'Johnny, I am shut up here. I shall die. Come and let me out.'

'O, by Jove, what does this mean! What have those confounded French beggars been doing to that little girl!' ejaculated Johnny. 'Now how am I to get at her?'

A moment's inspection of the neighbouring wall showed him a little narrow door in the recess between this turret and the next. He seized the iron ring that served as handle; the door was unlocked, and opened easily on the foot of a winding stone staircase. Up this Johnny sprang, turned into a twilight passage on the right, and found himself close to a door, of which the key was in the lock. He knocked, and there was a stifled cry inside. The handle was turned and shaken, and then came an eager voice—'Make haste, make haste, open the door!' Johnny wrenched the key round, and flung the door open. The next moment Marie was clinging to his arm.

'Where did you come from?'

O, I heard your voice, and another voice that I knew. Who was it? Did you come to look for me?'

'It was M. de Valmont,' said Johnny. 'Yes, we came to look for you. Mme. de Valmont is in the house with Mme. d'Yves.'

'Ah! then she has been telling lies, and saying that I am not here. That dear Mme. de Valmont! Where is she? Take me to her, Johnny.'

'Yes, you had better come to her at once,' said Johnny. 'You poor little thing, what have they been doing to you? Come along. Mind how you go down these horrid stairs. There, keep hold of me, and you will be all right.'

'Yes, yes,' said Marie, as they hurried down. 'But where is my grandmother? Have you seen her? Is she here?'

'No. Mme. de Valmont will take you home.'

Mme. d'Yves had not yet appeared in the salon, and Mme. de Valmont was getting a little tired of admiring the china, when she heard hurried uncertain steps coming up to the door.

Fortunately for M. le Baron's beautiful Sèvres, she had just had time to put down the cup she was holding, when Johnny and Marie dashed into the room together.

'Ah!' cried Mme. de Valmont.

She rose up suddenly, and held out her arms to the poor little prodigal, who ran into them without even seeing that there was any one else in the room. Johnny went quietly and looked out of the window. M. d'Yves pulled his moustache, stared from one to another, and muttered to himself. Another door opened, and Mme. d'Yves, elegantly dressed, and smiling, advanced into the room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

MME. DE VALMONT disengaged herself gently from Marie's embrace, and made a low inclination to Mme. d'Yves, who returned it with one equally formal. Then there was a moment's silence, broken by Mme. d'Yves, who began in rather a weak voice.

'Tiens! Mademoiselle has changed her mind. I understood that she wished to hide herself. I beg your pardon, madame, for making you wait so long, but I was unavoidably detained. I am charmed to see you. Bon jour, monsieur,' with another curtsy to Johnny. 'It is monsieur votre fils, madame?'

'No, madame. It is a friend of mine. Will you have the goodness,' said Mme. de Valmont, turning to Johnny, 'to see if the carriage is there?'

Johnny bowed and left the room. M. d'Yves was standing in a corner, making faces. In obedience to a glance from his wife, he went out after Johnny. Marie stood half behind Mme. de Valmont, and Mme. d'Yves politely begged them to sit down.

'Merci, madame,' said the Marquise. 'My little affair has arranged itself, you see. I came to ask whether you could give me any tidings of Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire. Monsieur votre mari appeared quite unable to do so. You see I am satisfied, though at the same time very much astonished. Did you come to this house of your own free will, my dear Marie, or what is the meaning of it all?'

'Yes, madame, I did. I was very wrong, and I am very sorry,' answered Marie, in a low voice.

'Does mademoiselle intend to pursue her journey to Paris this evening?' asked Mme. d'Yves.

'If not, perhaps she will be good enough to write to M. Wyatt that she has changed her mind. I will not say that a letter will be quite equally welcome with herself, when ce monsieur meets us at Mont-Parnasse. But we will hope that he is a philosopher, and will receive it with resignation. What do you say, mademoiselle?'

'Allow me to answer for you, Marie,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire is obliged for your hospitality, madame, and for the interest you take in her affairs. She has now, however, placed them in the hands of her own friends, who will arrange them as she wishes. She is responsible for her actions to no one but to madame sa grand'mère. Permit me also to remind you that kindness may sometimes be injudicious and misplaced, and that a person who allows herself to forward a flight of this kind is acting a part which must lower her position amongst honourable people.'

Mme. d'Yves's eyes flashed, but she was afraid of Mme. de Valmont, who on occasions could put on the dignity of an empress, and who as she stood there, tall, fair, and grave, was something like a beautiful reproving angel. It was indeed as if little Marie's ange gardien had suddenly swept down amongst the dark crew who had seized upon her, and taken her at once into safe shelter and care. Mme. d'Yves shrugged her shoulders and nodded her head expressively.

'Bien, madame,' said she. 'Mdle. de Saint-Hilaire is of course perfectly free to do as she pleases. At the same time she must allow me to say that when a thing is half done, the wisest course is generally to carry it through. She cannot think that she has improved her posi-

tion in the neighbourhood by this little adventure. M. Wyatt's disappointment is of course nothing in her eyes—though Heaven alone knows why she consented to run away with him, if she meant to turn back in the middle. But she should remember that an affair like this is not very soon forgotten—that former arrangements may not so easily be renewed, especially when a family has the pride of all the fiends—'

'Pardon, madame,' said Mme. de Valmont, flushing slightly. 'Mdlle. de Saint-Hilaire's position in the neighbourhood will be taken care of by those on whom it chiefly depends. It is quite unnecessary for you to trouble yourself about it.'

'Madame, I am charmed to hear you say so. And I am not even to take a message to M. Wyatt, mademoiselle?'

'I shall write to him myself. I am much obliged to you, madame,' answered Marie.

She hardly knew what she was saying, and was only conscious of a wonderful rest and peace in Mme. de Valmont's protecting presence. She was going back to her grandmother, and at the present moment that was all she cared to think of. The fear, the excitement, the heavy load that lay on her poor little conscience, seemed suddenly to be taken away. The stinging words of Mme. d'Yves, which had called that colour to her friend's cheeks, made no impression on her ears. She only just knew that Johnny appeared at the door, followed by the footman, who announced that the carriage was ready; that there was a great exchange of curtsies with Mme. d'Yves; that Mme. de Valmont put her arm round her, and half carried her down-stairs.

'Good-morning, dear mademoiselle,' said M. de Valmont's cheer-

ful voice in the archway. 'What do you say to this?' he said to his wife. 'Johnny and I think that he shall hire a horse at the Faisan, and ride off at once to Rochemar, while we go straight to Les Sapinières.'

'Madame!' exclaimed Marie, looking up with a flushed face and tearful eyes. 'Why to Rochemar?'

'Ma très-chère, your grandmother is there. When we passed through Sonnay this morning we heard that she was gone.'

'Ah!'

'Yes, a very good plan,' said Mme. de Valmont to her husband. 'If there is a horse at the Faisan that will do.'

'We must ask. Johnny, get inside with the ladies. I am going on the box.'

'Thank you, monsieur,' answered Johnny; 'I am going to walk;' and he set off at once.

'Stop at the Faisan,' said M. de Valmont to the coachman.

The Hôtel du Faisan was a long white house with green shutters, standing on the northern side of the chief 'place' in the town. Opposite it was the quaint little market-hall, and all round were shops. Some carts were standing in the square, and people were moving backwards and forwards across the open space. From the church-tower behind the houses the bells were ringing, as M. de Valmont's carriage came up the nearest lane and stopped on the uneven pavement in front of the inn.

Marie leaned back in the carriage and hid her face, feeling as if all the passers-by must be looking at her. Neither she nor Mme. de Valmont spoke. Morin jumped down and went into the yard to ask about a riding-horse, and as they waited there a dog-cart came in at a fast pace

from the opposite side of the square, and its driver pulled up close to them. Little Marie in her exhausted state, with only one conscious feeling—the wish to see and be seen by no one—did not at first understand at all what was going on; but her kind guardian bent forward with a flushed and eager face, and M. de Valmont leaned from the box, stretching out his hand to Louis de Rochemar, who had sprung down at once and come forward hat in hand to the carriage. The few words that passed were in so low a tone that Marie did not hear them; but a movement of Mme. de Valmont's, as she nodded and smiled to her old acquaintance, roused her a little. She peeped at her face, and, puzzled by what she saw there, looked further and met Louis's eyes. Of course she knew him at once, and yet hardly realised who it was, looking at her so kindly, with so much sorrow and affection, and a sort of longing self-reproach. Mme. de Valmont watched the young man's face with incredulous pleasure. In spite of her dignified rebuke to Mme. d'Yves, she was not without a lurking fear that Marie might have destroyed all her prospects in life by this distracted adventure: however, if M. de Rochemar did not think so, no one else's opinion mattered much. Marie herself seemed to be in a dream, from which in another moment she partially waked, and blushing crimson all over her pale face, turned aside to hide it in the darkest corner. Just then Johnny came up, and Morin appeared from the stable-yard with discouraging news about horses. When M. de Valmont introduced Johnny to the Marquis de Rochemar the sailor bowed very gravely; but Louis held out his hand.

'You were going to Rochemar,

monaieur,' he said, 'in search of Mme. de Saint-Hilaire. Allow me to offer you a seat in my dog-cart. I am going back at once, and shall have great pleasure in driving you.'

'C'est ça,' said M. de Valmont. 'As for ourselves, we will make the best of our way to Les Sapinières. Listen, Johnny. Tell madame votre tante not to be anxious or to hurry herself. Mme. de Valmont will stay till she comes. In fact, we shall invite ourselves to breakfast.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

MAUDSLEY.

OF course every one knows that England as a country to live in is safe, dull, humdrum, matter-of-fact, and uninteresting. In an ordinary English existence it is very seldom that anything happens unexpectedly, while across the Channel there is an electric current of uncertainty always in the air. It is charged with revolutions. You never know when your house may be burnt down, or when you may have to pack up on five minutes' notice and fly for your life. There are all sorts of charming little excitements, too, in the course of one's daily affairs, which are impossible in a well-regulated English house, where everything and everybody goes on as if wound up by machinery. Still very strange and unexpected things do sometimes happen to people.

So Johnny Wyatt thought, as he stood at an open window one August morning, and looked out across a lawn with glowing flower-beds in the shade of some tall elms full of rooks' nests. Some letters were lying on the breakfast-table, directed to Captain Wyatt, most

of them invitations from people in the neighbourhood.

It was the old Maudsley dining-room, where Johnny had never intruded himself much in his uncle's time, but where he was now master and at home. The old man had been dead about eight months, and had made a new will in his last illness, not long after reading a paragraph in the papers headed, 'Distinguished Gallantry of a young Naval Officer.' Some disaffected natives, somewhere in the East, had contrived to get possession of a British gunboat, and had seized and imprisoned her crew, who would certainly have been murdered if a certain young lieutenant, with twenty men at his back, had not stormed the place, routed several hundred natives, and brought the boat and her crew back in triumph. It was that old-fashioned kind of courage which people call foolhardiness nowadays; if it succeeds it is lauded to the skies, if it fails it is well laughed at. It is seldom found in men who consider their lives things of much value. Johnny, as you know, had little of this instinct of self-preservation; and it was an adventure which just suited him, rather more dangerous than anything he had gone through before. He came off with honour and glory, and got his promotion on the spot. Also, on his uncle's death, not many weeks afterwards, it was found that this quiet old man, occupied as he was with his own sorrow, had been able to measure his two nephews rightly. Frank's legacy of 5000*l.* was not sweetened by a paragraph in the will which explained Mr. Wyatt's change of intentions regarding the two brothers. A report of Francis's adventures when abroad in the previous summer had reached his ears, he said, and had convinced him that his was not a character

to be trusted with large estates. He had therefore resolved to make John his heir; thus showing his respect for simplicity, unselfishness, and bravery.

So it came to pass that Johnny, thinner and darker and older-looking, stood in his own dining-room window, and stared at the rooks' nests, while Frank, his leave being long ago at an end, was gone to join his regiment in Canada.

'Good-morning,' said Agnes, coming into the room. Her brother turned from the window, and they sat down to breakfast. 'What a number of letters! and here is a French one for me. I thought the aunt was never going to write to me again.'

'Don't you want to read it? I'll do the coffee,' said Johnny. 'Most of those others are invitations from people who did not think me worth speaking to when I used to come here years ago. Mrs. Ashwood—do you remember her? I always used to think it would be the grandest day in my life if I could only get her to look at me when she shook hands. I used to look hard in her face, but she was always glancing on to the next person.'

'Yes; I hate people who do that,' said Agnes. 'But you will have attention enough now, never fear. After all, you were only a little middy in those days.'

'No; I was a lieutenant. She did it the last time I saw her, four years ago.'

'Did she?' said Agnes absently, already absorbed in the long closely-covered sheets of her French letter.

Johnny poured out the coffee, and then opened a newspaper.

'Hallo!' he cried out, after a few minutes.

'What is it?'

'Moreau & Company have come

to smash. That great ship-building firm at Brest.

'Well!' said Agnes vaguely.

Johnny glanced up under his long eyelashes with a slightly wondering smile. Was it possible that any one's memory could be so short!

'Did you never hear of them before?' he said patiently.

'Brest! Ah, to be sure; you went there with M. de Valmont. I had quite forgotten the people's name. Are they quite done for? What a pity!'

'You heard all about them at the time,' said Johnny. 'Don't you remember? M. de Valmont had a very large share in the concern; in fact I believe he was one of the partners. Good gracious! and Johnny leaned his head on his hand with an air of immense depression.

Agnes looked sympathising, and hoped M. de Valmont was so rich in other ways that this would not make any serious difference to him. Then her eyes wandered back to her letter.

'Do you care to hear what my aunt says? There is something about them—'

'Go on.'

"I know you must have been glad, my dear Agnes," said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, after some affectionate sentences at the beginning, "to hear of Marie's happy marriage, and to know that my long anxiety about her has come to an end at last. I fear you must have thought during the last two years that both she and I have neglected you sadly. You heard of her illness, so long and so serious, that those who loved her were afraid her health and strength were entirely lost, and that her nerves could never recover the trial they had gone through. That she did recover at all was entirely owing to the generosity and tender-

ness of M. de Rochemar. You will understand what I mean by generosity. He never alluded to the past; but when the poor child was able to come down-stairs, he asked me to allow him to do what he could for himself. His success was as complete as it was deserved; and even in England, I assure you, you could not find two people who love each other more sincerely. Mme. de Rochemar and myself are very happy in the fulfilment of our wishes. I will now give you a little account of the wedding."

'Won't that keep? Johnny suggested at this point. 'I thought you said there was something about the De Valmonts.'

'We shall come to that directly. I'll spare you the wedding itself—you can read it afterwards; but the reception at Rochemar must have been really lovely. My aunt went there to stay with Mme. de Rochemar, and there were a great many other people staying there; M. and Mme. de l'Allier—I remember them; don't you? My aunt says: "The people worked fifteen days preparing triumphal arches; and though Rochemar is such a little village, nothing could have been prettier or more perfectly done. Louis and Marie arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, on a most beautiful day. They got out of their carriage at the first arch, where four little girls in white and wreaths of flowers presented each a tribute to the bride. One had a live partridge in a basket, representing the game of the country; the second had a basket containing a cream cheese and a pot of milk; the third a bunch of grapes and a small sheaf of wheat; and the fourth a large nosegay. The Maire and the Curé made speeches, to which Louis replied. There was a

double line of National Guards of a hundred men each; and in the midst of all this I went, with Mme. de Rochemarand her friends, to meet the young couple. We then set off to walk to the château in procession: Louis and Marie first, then ourselves, the Maire, and the Curé, and then the soldiers following. At the entrance of the château there was another triumphal arch, where we took leave of the Garde. In the salon the young girls of the village were awaiting us to present their nosegay, and they made a very pretty speech. Then we dined, whilst a band played on the terrace; and all the village people sat down to an out-door feast. In the evening the whole of the avenue was illuminated, and there were banners flying in every direction. People came from Carillon and all the neighbouring villages; and we walked about till nearly midnight amongst constant cries of 'Vive Monsieur le Marquis!' 'Vive Madame la Marquise!' You will believe that I have seldom spent a more delightful evening. I thought several times of you, my dear Agnes, and wished you could see the charming scene. You always took an interest in our people, and their behaviour on this occasion would have convinced you of their kind, affectionate, and gentle nature. Marie has, of course, been received most cordially by the whole neighbourhood. She has one great grief, however—which is mine also—that we are likely very soon to lose our dear friends M. and Mme. de Valmont. I fear he has been getting into difficulties for some time past. Several of his speculations have failed, and now he is involved in the bankruptcy of some great ship-builders at Brest. They talked of selling Lauron, but I hope it is only to be let,

and that their circumstances may improve by and by. They will, at any rate, leave it in September, and go to Tours for a time, till they can arrange their further plans. Their son Max is married to Mdlle. de Pontmercy, and now lives in Paris. Pierre and Cécile are at present with their parents."

'Not married!' exclaimed Johnny, under his breath.

His sister paused and looked up.

'I need not read any more, for you won't listen to it,' she said. 'Not married, I suppose. But, dear Johnny, for pity's sake, don't let us have any more of those French entanglements. I am sure we had a lesson to keep out of them. And now that you are so well off, and could marry some charming English girl, who would make this a really happy home for you! Do consider. I daresay you would have no better success than you had before.'

Poor Agnes! In the history of mankind, is there an instance of the wisest sisterly counsels having any effect on a brother who was in love?

'Suppose you have some toast, and don't talk about it,' Johnny suggested.

He did not say a word about his intentions; but Agnes was painfully aware that all the invitations were declined, that the tidal-service in Bradshaw was being carefully studied, and that she might as well arrange to return home at her earliest convenience, leaving Maudsley in the care of the old housekeeper, who, with all her fellow-servants, already worshipped the Captain, as they called him.

CHAPTER XXV.

VESPERS AT LAURON.

I do not think it even occurred to Johnny to go respectably to his aunt's house, and from thence pay a correct visit to M. and Mme. de Valmont. As Lauron was his object, he found that the only natural course was to take the shortest way, to travel day and night till he got as near to it as the railway would bring him. This end of his journey was not Carillon, but a little town on the other side of the country—a small, clean, smart place—where he found a good inn for breakfast, and hired the master of the inn, his shaky wagonette, and old white horse, to take him on the three or four leagues to Lauron. M. Célestin did not find his passenger very communicative, and after some efforts at conversation took refuge in whistling and talking to his horse. It was impossible to be agreeable to a wooden-headed Anglais, who sat half asleep, with his head bent and his arms folded, and seemed to care for nothing, not even politics. It was Sunday, and as they approached Lauron the bells were ringing for vespers.

'Did monsieur wish to go to the château?' Célestin inquired. 'The family might very likely be at church. Not many more Sundays for them in their own old church.'

'They are going away soon, then?' said Johnny.

'Mais oui, monsieur. In fifteen days or so.'

Johnny woke and looked about him, as they crawled up the hill to the village in the broiling sun. There were the meadows, now burnt and brown; there was the river, and the well-remembered mill. On the other side were the heathy wilds, running away to the woods, where he used

to shoot with those jolly French sportsmen two years ago. What changes since then! He had been to the other side of the world; and it was a wonder that he had brought his life back with him. Little he had thought of ever wanting it for such a purpose as this. In that case he was not sure that the blacks would have been so welcome to it. A sudden glimpse through the trees and houses of the irregular street showed him the château, great and stately as of old, the August sun burning down on its high-peaked roofs and massive walls. All the trees and woods about it looked brown and shrivelled after the long hot summer. They were fading, like the fortunes of its owner. Johnny stopped his driver at a turn in the street where a narrow lane led up to the church, and asked him to wait at the inn a little further on till he heard of him again, which would be in an hour or two. He was not sure whether he should want to go back that day or not. In the mean time he left his portmanteau in Célestin's charge.

As he walked slowly and thoughtfully up the lane, he saw a barber's shop open on the other side of the road, and stood still and read the inscription on the sign, with a vague notion that his own locks would be the better for a little snipping. They grew more plentifully than ever, and would curl, though he did his best to brush them out straight. The legend was inviting: '*Ici on embellit la jeunesse. Ici on rajeunit la vieillesse.*' Johnny wavered for a few moments; but as he stood looking the church-bell stopped, and he resolved to go on at once to the church. What could an inch more or less of hair signify, when she was there? And who could tell that this would not be

his very last chance of seeing her! So this young sea-king, with his dark face and waving red-brown wig, went on up the lane to the churchyard, where groups of blue blouses were turning in under the rich archway of the Romanesque tower.

When Johnny followed them in, out of the blazing sunshine, he could at first see nothing but a confused crowd of white caps and blouses; but as his eyes got used to the dim light, he spied out the Marquis's seat by our Lady's altar, with the white statuette and the pretty light-blue covering, and in it two ladies in hats, and the dark close-cropped head of a young man. Johnny had taken the nearest chair to the door, and as he sat there, while the monotonous chanting of the vesper psalms went on, horrible misgivings began to crowd into his mind. After all, had he not been a great fool to come here without some more certain knowledge of the circumstances? It would be a most extraordinary thing, he now began to think, if two whole years had passed, and Mdlle. de Valmont was neither married nor engaged. Especially as, so long ago, there had been some idea of a good match for her. Johnny could not see that young man's face. He supposed it was Pierre. But if it should not be Pierre! and if, just from the stupidity of not making inquiries beforehand, he should only have come there to make a fool of himself! He was within an ace of getting up and leaving the church as quietly as he had entered it, but somehow he stayed where he was.

After the *Magnificat* he remained kneeling till some of the people were gone out, and raised his face just as the party from the château were passing. Mme. de

Valmont rustled gently by without seeing him, but he stood up and met Cécile face to face. She did not smile, but it was not the first time that he had seen that sudden flash of life and joy in her eyes. Pierre—for it was no one else—was looking another way and did not see him, neither did he hear the vesper thanksgiving that rose to his sister's lips as she crossed herself with the holy water: '*Nos qui vivimus, benedicimus Domino.*'

Johnny followed them out slowly into the bright churchyard. One of his misgivings was gone already—that which would persist in reminding him, all through his journey, that the parting between Cécile and himself had not been such as quite to promise a happy meeting. The violets—and that curtsy of hers, which seemed to change their relations so entirely, and to put him in the position of a rather inferior acquaintance. But there were instincts underlying these recollections, which gave him confidence, though he did not himself know where it came from. Now he knew—I believe he had really known it all along—that Cécile was unchanged and unchangeable. 'We never forget,' she had said to him that wretched morning. And he was quite sure that if anybody else had a superior claim upon her, that look of frank and happy surprise would never have been given to him. He saw that she was speaking to her mother and brother, and heard one or two astonished exclamations. Then Pierre came hurrying back to meet him, while the ladies stopped and turned round at the foot of the churchyard steps. The village people looked on, while Johnny, with his hat in his hand, went forward to Mme. de Valmont, who was waiting for him

with an anxious flush upon her face. Johnny thought as she welcomed him to Lauron, speaking with a little unevenness in her voice, and looking at him almost wistfully, that in all his travels he had never seen a more charming-looking woman. She thought that her old friend had grown rather grave and conventional in manner. But Cécile knew that it was the same Johnny, only if possible more deeply in earnest, who took her hand and just raised his gray eyes half shyly to her face.

'You have been a long time paying us your promised visit,' said Mme. de Valmont, as they all walked away together towards the château. 'Do you know that you had very nearly lost your chance of seeing Lauron again?'

'Yes, madame; so I heard,' answered Johnny.

'I suppose you are come from Les Sapinières? We were there yesterday, but Mme. de Saint-Hilaire did not expect you. You took her by surprise.'

'I have not been there at all. I came across country to Vèze, and got a fellow with a wagonette to bring me on here. I hope M. de Valmont is well?'

'Very well, thank you. We shall find him at the château.'

'Maman,' said Cécile suddenly, 'I am going with Pierre to Nicole's; we shall overtake you presently.'

'And in the mean time,' said Mme. de Valmont, 'I shall hear all the wonderful adventures of M. le Capitaine. We have a great deal of respect for you now, monsieur. You are a hero. Yes; we saw you in the newspaper.'

'I am very sorry, madame,' said Johnny.

'He must tell his adventures over again to Pierre and me,' said Cécile.

'Pardon, mademoiselle!'

It was all just like old times; the gentle friendly teasing and quiet sincere compliments of the Marquise; her daughter's look of half-sympathising fun. Their misfortunes seemed to have no effect whatever upon these people, except perhaps on Pierre, who stood by silent and with a rather grave face—but he had never been demonstrative.

I am afraid an English sailor showed a great want of principle and patriotism to feel such relief in his escape from Englishwomen and all their angles to these graceful-mannered people, on whom no outward circumstances seemed to have any power, and who could smile and say pretty things in the depth of misfortune quite as naturally as when they were the leading ladies of the neighbourhood. Cécile and her brother turned into Nicole's yard, and Johnny walked on with Mme. de Valmont, into the pleasant shade of the avenue.

'You are not much changed,' she said, looking at him kindly. 'But do you know that I am very angry with you? How could you risk your life so foolishly?'

'It was not for nothing,' said Johnny. 'And my life would not have been much loss to any one if I had left it behind. But it seems determined to stay with me, though I am sure I don't know why.'

'You are a foolish child, and very ungrateful, if you do not believe that your life is valuable to any one. But I am very glad to see you again, just the same as ever. Why did you not write to say that you were coming?'

'I don't know, madame,' said Johnny. 'I thought I should go on to Les Sapinières, but I came first to see how you all were.'

This was not much of an ex-

planation, but Mme. de Valmont was wise enough to appear satisfied.

'We have had great changes since you were here,' she went on. 'You have perhaps heard that my son Max is married to Stéphanie de Pontmercy, the most charming girl in the world. We are all devoted to her. She has a good fortune, and they have an apartment in Paris, where they spend most of the year.'

'That must please M. de Pontmercy,' remarked Johnny. 'He was very fond of your son Max.'

'Yes,' said Mme. de Valmont, with a little sigh. 'Max was considered a good parti. And I suppose you will go to Rochemar to see your cousin Marie. That dear child has made a most suitable and happy marriage.'

'I was very glad to hear of that. If it had not come right, I don't think any of us could have ventured into this part of France again.'

'There was certainly no shadow of blame attaching to you, my dear Johnny,' said Mme. de Valmont, with all her old kindness. 'On the contrary, it always pleases me to think that you and I between us brought the poor little thing back. Where is your brother now?'

'With his regiment in Canada,' said Johnny. He hesitated, and smiled a little. 'There was a great deal in his last letter about a young Canadian lady.'

'Well, I sincerely hope that he will make a satisfactory marriage and settle down at last,' said the Marquise.

She did not seem at all inclined to talk of her own family or their affairs, and made no further allusion to leaving Lauron. But her manner to Johnny was as kind as possible, and as they were getting near the château he thought he must seize the

present opportunity to ask his fate once more. If it was still the same, it would be no use to stay there and torture himself in sight of what was unattainable. Neither could he bear to go on to Les Sapinières. He would take Célestin and his carriage back to Vèze at once, and go home to England as fast as steam would take him. In the meantime he was far too much in earnest to use any polite circumlocutions, and bolted head foremost into his subject.

'Madame, I see that Mdlle. Cécile is not married yet. May I ask if she is engaged?'

'Well, no, she is not,' said Mme. de Valmont, with a little hesitation, and, grande dame as she was, colouring like a girl.

'I have not forgotten what you told me before,' said Johnny, 'about manifest impossibilities. But perhaps you know, madame—you may have heard—that I have got a great deal that I never expected or deserved; and though it is nothing for her, compared with what she might expect, forgive me for asking whether it is still so impossible.'

Johnny stopped short, feeling that he was making a dreadful mess of it, and that Mme. de Valmont was laughing at his awkward blunders.

'I suppose I am a fool for letting myself think of it,' he said rather sadly. 'I always was, and always shall be. Of course you have the same objections that you had before—a different country and all that. But please tell me at once, because, if you say no, I can run down the village and be off. I could not bear to see her again.'

'Wait a moment,' said Mme. de Valmont, putting out her hand. For once she seemed to have a little difficulty in finding words

as Johnny stood before her, with earnest entreating eyes fixed on her face. 'You have told me something, and now I have something to tell you in my turn. And it is this—that for the last two years you have been the trouble of my life.'

'How, madame?' said Johnny, in a low voice.

'In this way. Cécile has had several excellent offers, all of which she refused without any good reason. As soon as any gentleman was proposed to her, the unfortunate man became the object of her strong dislike. Now I promised her once that she should choose for herself, and therefore, though you may be sure that I remonstrated, I could do nothing more. It was not till we heard of your heroic conduct last year that I discovered—though I had my suspicions before—who it was that stood in the way of all these gentlemen. So, you see, I have reason to be very angry with you. Now that you feel yourself justified in coming back to ask for her again, I can only say, speak to her yourself, like a brave Englishman, and, if she says yes, I can promise you that her father and I will not say no. After all,' Mme. de Valmont went on, smiling, with tears in her eyes, 'it will be only paying the debt she owes you.' Johnny kissed her hand without saying anything. 'Yes,' she said, 'you are both good, and you will be very happy.'

Johnny followed Mademoiselle de Valmont into the garden that afternoon, and found her gathering pink clusters of late roses in the shade of the old colombier. A very large hat shaded her fair hair and her pale face, which flushed a little as she heard a step approaching. She turned round and smiled a silent welcome.

'Mademoiselle,' said Johnny, in his slowest and gravest manner, 'don't you like violets better than roses?'

'I know *you* do not,' answered Cécile.

'Then I wonder why I have kept a dead one for two years,' said Johnny, holding out a square brown hand with a gray flattened violet lying in the palm. 'Yes, I must confess, I took it after you were gone. Will you forgive me?'

'I was very foolish. I must ask you to forgive me,' said Cécile gently.

'Then you have not forgotten it?'

'No.'

'You have thought of me sometimes? Your mother said I might come and tell you how I have always loved you with all my heart. Do you care for me enough to leave your country and all your people? Am I asking too much?'

Johnny Wyatt is not by any means universally admired, and many people since that day have wondered how in the world he managed to gain the affection of this young French lady, with her beauty, refinement, and nobility. They were not there in the old château garden when the dead violet lay between two clasped hands, and Cécile told her English lover, perhaps not exactly in words, that he could not ask too much, for life had long ceased to be life, without him.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A LITTLE MARQUISE.

ONCE more a full moon was shining on the Château des Sapinières, such a moon as shone there when Johnny saw it first.

He reminded his aunt that it was exactly two years from that day. Mme. de Saint-Hilaire smiled, and answered him kindly, but yet sighed a little, for it seemed to her that she had struggled through a good deal of trouble to the fulfilment of the plans of that day.

Marie's first engagement and its consequences were not very pleasant recollections, however well things might have arranged themselves since. But she was obliged to forget past trouble in sympathy with the flappy party who came to dine with her that night.

All the rooms were lighted up, and doors and windows stood open on the terrace, where the younger people sat and wandered about in the moonlight. In the salon the Comtesse entertained her elder guests, M. and Mme. de Valmont and Mme. de Rochemar. Peloton, after bestowing all kinds of endearments on the younger Marquise, had finally established himself on the end of her train, as she sat in a low chair on the terrace. She and Cécile had a long talk here together, before Louis, Pierre, and Johnny came out of the library, where they had been playing billiards. Then they all laughed and chatted together. The sound of their merry voices came in at the salon windows, where Mme. de Valmont was telling her friends some interesting news.

'Ma chère,' cried Mme. de Rochemar ecstatically, 'I never heard anything that delighted me more. Then we are not going to lose you, after all. Let me go and tell Louis at once.'

'Wait a little,' said Mme. de Valmont. 'He will not be long without knowing. Cécile has told Marie, and now Johnny is there, and it cannot be so well talked of in his presence. It is all his

doing—is it not, mon ami? she added, turning to her husband.

'Certainly,' said M. de Valmont. 'He has advanced the money to help us through the present difficulty. He spoke first to Pierre, and then came to me and offered it, in the most generous manner. He has behaved throughout like a gentleman. I may confess to you, mesdames, that I am proud of my future son-in-law.'

'I am very happy,' said Mme. de Saint-Hilaire, 'to be connected with the families of both my best friends.'

While the party in the salon were thus congratulating themselves and each other, Marie got up, rousing Peloton from his resting-place, and tapped Johnny on the arm with her fan.

'Let us take a little walk,' she said. 'I want to speak to you.'

'I shall be charmed,' said Johnny.

'Mon petit Louis, you and M. Pierre must entertain Cécile, and not let her run after us. Come along, Johnny. You and I have our little secrets that nobody else must hear.'

She made him come down the steps, and they walked slowly along together towards the tourelles and the avenue. For the first minute or two she was silent, and an owl flew across among the trees with a melancholy hoot, almost close to them.

'Listen to the chouettes,' said Marie. 'They always make me shiver.'

'It is a horrid noise,' said Johnny. 'Well, madame, what have you to say to me?'

He thought Marie was even smaller and paler than she used to be, and that her appearance was not improved by the rather magnificent style of dress which she

had adopted to please her mother-in-law. But she certainly seemed much more uniformly happy than in the old days; there was a sort of careless content in her manner, the peevishness was gone, and to her husband and his mother she was always affectionate and gentle. She did very well as a great lady, and yet Johnny wondered how any one could compare her for an instant to Mdlle. de Valmont in her plain white muslin gown.

'I have given you all my congratulations,' said Marie, opening and shutting her fan as she walked. 'I am not going to praise Cécile. You know that I think her perfect, and hate you very much for taking her away. However, as they are to stay at Lauron, I suppose you will be often there; and you must come to us at Rochemar. I want to know—have you heard from your brother lately?'

'I had a letter this morning, forwarded from home. I was telling your grandmother all about him. He is going to be married.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes. To a Canadian lady, a Miss Terry. She is very pretty and very poor. Frank says they will have at first something of a struggle. I can't say that I envy the young lady,' Johnny added, after a moment's pause.

'I don't know that you need say that,' said Marie. 'If she loves him enough, they will do very well. I was going to tell you that he wrote to me not long ago, a very nice kind letter. He knew afterwards, just as I did, that what we did once was very foolish as well as very wrong. We did not really understand each other—we should never have been happy. I know now that I should have been very wretched.

Poor Frank! I shall write to congratulate him now in my turn.'

'What will M. de Rochemar say?'

'What are you thinking of? He saw Frank's letter, and will see this. Johnny, remember that you and your wife must know each other's thoughts if you are to be happy. Louis and I understand each other perfectly.'

'I will not forget your advice, madame,' said Johnny, with a grave little smile.

'I mean to have Agnes to stay with me one of these days, if she will forget all the trouble I gave her,' said Marie, as they returned towards the terrace.

M. de Rochemar came down the steps to meet them with a white shawl on his arm.

'It is not so warm now, ma petite. You must put this on. My mother thinks the air is fresh enough to shrivel up her flower.'

'Merci, mon ami,' said Marie gently, submitting to be wrapped up. 'It is a poor pinched little flower at its best.'

'Are you there, my children?' cried Mme. de Rochemar, appearing at the door.

Marie took her husband's arm and went to her: there they stood talking together in low tones, in the broad light that streamed out on the terrace.

Pierre walked off to play with Peloton, and Johnny and Cécile lingered at the top of the steps.

'Do you know what happened this day two years?' said Cécile.

'Certainly,' said Johnny. 'I met two ladies going into that old church at Le Mans. And do you know what I said to myself when I saw them?'

'No, indeed, Johnny. What was it?'

'Here she is.'

FIFTY YEARS A CRICKETER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE CRICKET-FIELD.'

IV. THE OLD KENT ELEVEN.

AMIDST all the recollections of myself and of my cotemporaries, no cricket matches hold a more prominent place than the glorious contests of the old Kent Eleven, and the annual fixtures of 'Kent against England,' which continued to be the great match of the season for twenty years, from 1834 to 1854; and I think all true cricketers will admit that the achievements of the county of Kent deserve a distinct record for the spirited endeavour of Lord Harris to bring together all the talent of his county, and once more to give Kent its old-time superiority as second to none as a cricketing county of all the counties of England.

Kent has as fair a title to be regarded as *cunabula Roma*, the cradle of cricket, as any other county. Hampshire has too often been pronounced to be the earliest county that showed any excellence in our national game; but Kent may justly claim to share the honour with Hants. Kent was the earliest antagonist of Hants, and the earliest county that played single-handed against All England; and much betting would appear to be customary at this great match, for, as early as the year 1748, the Law Reports contain an account of an action brought in the Court of King's Bench to recover two bets of twenty pounds each—a very large sum in those days—laid on a match of cricket, which had

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been played by the County of Kent against All England. The question raised was, whether cricket was a game within the meaning of the words of the statute, 'or any other game or games whatever,' by the 9th of Anne. The court held 'that cricket was a game, and a very manly game too, not bad in itself, but only in the ill use made of it by betting more than ten pounds on it; but that was bad and against law.'

An exciting match of Kent against England was also, in 1770, made the subject of a mock heroic poem, written by one James Love, comedian. The heart-stirring crisis of the match is thus described:

'To end th' immortal honours of the day,
The chiefs of Kent once more their
might array:
No trifling toil e'en yet remains un-
tried,
Nor mean the numbers on the adverse
side.
With double skill each dangerous ball
they shun,
Strike with observing eye, with caution
run.
At length they know the wish'd-for
number near,
Yet wildly pant and almost know they
fear:
The two last champions even now are in,
And but three notches now remain to
win,
When, almost ready to recant its boast,
Ambitious Kent within an ace had lost.
The mounting ball, again obliquely
driven,
Cuts the pure ether, soaring up to
heaven.
Wallock was ready—Wallock, all must
own.
As sure a swain to catch as e'er was
known:
But whether Jove and all-compelling
Fate
In their high will resolved that Kent
should best,

MM

Or the lamented youth too much relied
On sure success and Fortune often tried,
The erring ball, amazing to be told,
Slipp'd through his outstretch'd hand,
and mock'd his hold!

And now the sons of Kent complete the
game,
And firmly fix their everlasting fame.'

Kent held its high position as a fair rival for All England, without men given, till the year 1789, by which time, by the formation of the Marylebone Club, Middlesex had become powerful, as also had the counties of Surrey and Sussex; so Kent was obliged to be reconciled to no higher honour than that of competing in ordinary county matches.

But, in the year 1834, it was observed that in every great match the Marylebone Club drew their foremost men from Kent. So Kent, after measuring its strength with Sussex, the land of Broadbridge and of Lillywhite, once more aspired to the honour of playing England single-handed, and thenceforth 'Kent against England' formed part of the season's programme for the lovers of cricket.

In this year, 1834, Mynn, Felix, and Wenman, who were the main supports of Kent during the whole of the series of All-England matches, headed the eleven. They were assisted by Mr. Harenc, who was then the first gentleman bowler, second only to Lillywhite, and also by Mr. Herbert Jenner, as fine a wicket-keeper as ever appeared at Lord's. 'I bowl the best ball of any man in England,' said old Lillywhite, 'and Mr. Harenc the next best.'

Alfred Mynn, though not so much to be depended on at that time, with Mills, did the rest of the bowling; but then Pilch always played against Kent, not being then naturalised in Kent, though afterwards he received an annual retainer from the county,

and was engaged at Canterbury to instruct the club, and was quite the father of the Eleven. Mr. Fagge, who played often in the name of Fredericks, showed by far the best form of batting in my day at Oxford. I remember well when he was practising against pelting for bowling on Cowley Marsh, for the first county match, his college having given him permission to go to Lord's for this great occasion, on which too he played a fine innings. Mr. Knatchbull also played. He was a celebrated Wykehamist and a dashing field. However, Kent did not win. Cobbett and Lillywhite as bowlers, backed up by Pilch and Marsden, on the side of England—and the said spinning bowlers, be it remembered, powerfully aided by the rough state of Lord's ground—were quite enough then to account for Kent's defeat.

Next year, in 1835, Hillyer and Clifford joined the Kent Eleven, and Kent, though beat in one innings in the first match, returned the compliment in the second by winning in one innings also.

In 1836, Pilch still played against Kent, and the match ended as a drawn game, but much in favour of Kent, and the next two seasons, that is in 1837 and 1838, no Kent and England match was played; for Alfred Mynn's illness, to which we shall presently refer, would have deprived Kent of his powerful assistance.

In this year the Marylebone Club made a Kent and England match at Town Malling for Pilch's benefit, and Kent won after a most exciting contest by only two runs. Kent also won the return match this year by three wickets. It was in this match that Redgate—than whom no man more frequently took Pilch's wicket—bowed Pilch,

Alfred Mynn, and Stearman in one over! and, said an eye-witness, he drank a glass of brandy (I hope not a large one) between each wicket as it fell.

Fuller Pilch, Dorrington, and Tom Adams had joined at length the Kent Eleven — good men all. Mr. Haygarth remarks that at this time there was a remarkable number of good bowlers, gentlemen and professionals; never so many at the same time. These comprised Sir Frederic Bathurst, Messrs. Alfred Mynn, Charles Taylor, Harenc, Sayres, Whittaker, Kirwan, and Craven; and as professionals, Lillywhite, James Dean, Hillyer, Cobbett, Redgate, Clarke, James Taylor, Fenner of Cambridge, T. Barker of Nottingham, George Pickwell of Sussex, Tom Adams, Hodson, Martingell, Good, and Bayley. The reason there have been so few good bowlers lately is that the spin and devilry of the bowling is spoilt by overwork; our bowlers play too many matches, with exhausting school engagements before the season opens; and some belong to All-England travelling elevens, and the like. In this way our bowlers are spoilt and used up. Fine bowling requires a delicacy of hand and free, fresh, and lively wrist. This natural movement of the hand is soon replaced by a mechanical jerk of the shoulder and by a twist and wriggle of the whole body, and, worst of all now, by a high hand and a pelting action, with which style such balls as Hillyer's are quite impossible.

In 1840, Kent, at Lord's, lost by 76 runs; but E. Wenman, their captain, wicket-keeper, and almost their best batsman, was ill, and unable to play.

'This,' said Felix, 'was uncertain to the last; and then, I am sorry to say, I saw a certain noble

lord, and another who should have had a nobler spirit, walk down to the gate at Lord's and obtain the earliest information, and then remark, "As Wenman is not playing, and that makes all the difference too, we can now afford to back England. We need say nothing about what we know of Kent's loss." I have lived always a poor man, but I never condescended to such tricks as that.'

It was in this match that Tom Adams hit a ball to the top of the tennis-court, and made a hole in the tiles which long remained unrepaired, a visible record of the hit.

In 1841, Kent won the first match by two wickets, though Felix did not play. In this match Wenman stumped three men, and one of them he stumped off Mynn's swift bowling—happy for Kent that Mynn had any wicket-keeper to do him justice. It was in this year first that Martingell joined the Kent side—a fine field, fair bat, and very useful bowler of a medium pace.

In the return match of this year Felix was again absent; still Kent beat All England in one innings.

These Kent and England matches continued more frequently in favour of Kent, to 1853, but their last victory was in 1849, though Kent probably would have beaten England in 1851, for in that year one game was drawn decidedly in their favour. After the year 1854 Kent never was matched against England even-handed till 1862. It is evident that the strength of the county depended on some five men—a host in themselves; and with the youth and strength of these men, the glory of Kent and the proud boast of one county standing against All England departed too.

The men to whom I allude were

Mr. Alfred Mynn, who played thirty-two out of the thirty-three games which, 'out and home,' were played from 1834 to 1854, chiefly owing to Mynn's injury at Leicester, and the long illness which followed, there was no Kent match in 1837 and 1838, nor did Kent record a victory up to that time. They had too many amateurs, and that in a day when gentlemen had no school or college professionals, and did not practise as earnestly as of later years. Messrs. Harenc, whose bowling had declined, Fagge, Knatchbull, and Norman were good men all, but not quite up to the mark of All-England men. But in 1839 and 1840, Thomas Adams, Dorrington, Fuller Pilch, and Martingell added a power of strength indeed; and these, with Mr. Walter Mynn, Hillyer, and Wenman, for ten years—from 1839 to 1849—played about even with All England, winning nine matches and losing ten; Martin and Hinkly coming in as useful recruits in 1845 and 1848 respectively.

Mr. Herbert Jenner played the earlier matches; and Mr. Emilius Bayley in 1842-4; and Mr. C. de Baker played occasionally during the whole series, from 1841; and Mr. Whittaker for five years.

Pilch and Martingell were not native players, but naturalised only by professional engagements; but other counties had similar advantages. Felix, like Martingell, was Surrey born; but Felix kept his school for years at Blackheath, a denizen of Kent.

To continue my recollections of these Kent and All-England matches after 1841. In 1842 the first match was played on the Beverley Ground, Canterbury. Fuller Pilch came out with a grand score of 98, and Felix kept him company for 74, against eight

bowlers: Lillywhite, Dean, Barker, Hawkins, Fennex, Good, Butler, and Sewell. These I may well enumerate, to show how strong was the All-England Eleven at that time. The whole score of the first innings was 278; and this was long odds in favour of the side that scored so many in those days, yet England scored only 12 less; and Lillywhite, getting seven wickets, put the Kent Eleven out for only 44 in the second innings, and All England won by ten wickets. In this match Guy made 80 for All England; and with one forward drive, for which he was famous, he made seven runs, without any overthrow.

In 1845, old Lillywhite, though fifty-three years of age, scored 30 and 7. The byes—14 and 15 lost by England, and 10 and 12 by Kent—seem in these days too many for good fielding, but we must remember the fast bowling and the state of the ground before heavy rollers were known. But on any ground, for byes and leg-byes, five per cent on the whole score is fair fielding.

In 1846, at Lord's, the match was a very exciting one: England won by one wicket. Lillywhite, then fifty-four years of age, bowled beautifully, and got ten wickets, though Martingell, Dean, and Clarke took the other end, always the Pavilion end; for old Lilly always said, 'I shall have the lower wicket, and after that you can have which you please.'

This gave him both the slope of the ground and, usually, the summer breeze at his back. But this slope was too much for the great natural twist of Clarke's slows, so Clarke preferred to twist against the hill from the other end.

In the return match at Canterbury, Kent, with an innings of

only 94, won in one innings, though Alfred Mynn, their great bowler, was unable to play—the only occasion on which he failed to appear for Kent. In the Gravesend and Essex match, a week before, he and Box had come into painful collision while rushing for the same ball, and both were too much hurt to play in the match.

In 1847, at the match at Canterbury, Felix caught out seven at point, at which place he was an excellent field. Dorrington was almost as good at cover as Hillyer was at short-stop, so the Kent fielding was very strong. When Wenman was absent, Dorrington kept wicket. Tom Adams was capital at long-leg, and Martingell good anywhere.

By the year 1848 the best players were growing old. Fuller Pilch was forty-eight, and Wenman and Felix forty-five years of age. Great then was the value of a new colt like Hinkly, who got sixteen wickets in one match, and all in the second innings, though Hillyer and A. Mynn took the other end. Still England won. Age had begun to tell, and England, after the railway system had been so long developed, drew good men together from north and south, east and west, to take away the last chance of Kent any longer standing against England. William Clarke now appeared on England's side. 'Against Clarke's bowling all the best players,' says Mr. Denison, 'muffed their play. Pilch scored only 2 and 13, Dorrington 11 and 6, A. Mynn 1 and 4, Wenman 2 and 0, and Hillyer 2 and 6.' In the return match, however, the scores were small, and Kent won without any help from Hinkly's bowling.

Mr. Haygarth relates that the match was won by Mynn hitting

the ball to Parr, who, instead of throwing it up, ran off and pocketed it as the perquisite of the man who last handled the ball. This caused an alteration in the custom; the ball was henceforth ordered to be given to the umpires, and thus an unseemly scramble for the ball after the game hit was obviated for the future.

In 1849, Kent played without either Wenman or Dorrington, and Clifford, not so good a performer, was chosen as wicket-keeper. In this match Lillywhite greatly distinguished himself: he was then fifty-seven years of age, yet he clean bowled five in the first innings; Wisden and Clarke bowled at the other end, but neither of them did by any means as much to win the match. Wisden and Clarke, however, being now in full force, usually made England very strong. As to Lillywhite, whoever wishes to judge correctly of his powers must remember that up to this late age no man did more with the ball. Whatever bowlers took the other end, Lillywhite almost always had his share of bowled or caught, and many clean bowled; he almost despised catching men out: he liked to dig them out, and send the stump-bails flying. What if they had seen him, with all the freshness of his spin and abrupt rise which characterised his bowling, in his earlier days in Sussex!

In 1850, at Canterbury, though Fuller Pilch was fifty, he scored 29 and 51; when Wenman at forty-seven scored 30 and 29 for Kent: but Kent lost by fifteen runs.

In 1851, at Cranbrook in Kent, in consequence of rain, the match was drawn, but decidedly in favour of Kent. This was one of the All-England matches got up

by Clarke, and at a time that Daniel Day was second to no bowler of the day, at least under Clarke's guidance. 'Be sure, Day, while you bowl for me,' said the old one, 'that you never let any man go on playing you back. Pitch well up, and drive them on to forward play, and I will set the field to suit you. The worst ball you can bowl is a short-pitched one.' 'Clarke and Day,' said Mr. Haygarth, 'bowed 128 balls to Pilch and Wenman without a run.' I give this on his good authority; if true, it beats all the feats ever heard of with the ball.

In 1851, Kent had lost for ever Dorrington and Martin; though Wilsher had commenced his career; but by this time Grundy had joined England, which registered a victory by four wickets.

After 1851, A. Mynn's bowling failed, he had grown very heavy (about twenty stone), and in 1853 Kent had the humiliation of following—*Solve senescentem*—their innings. Adams was aged forty, Pilch fifty-three, Wenman forty-eight, A. Mynn forty-seven, and Hillyer forty. The glory of Kent had departed. The extent to which Kent depended on one limited set of famous players may be judged from this—that, out of the thirty-three matches played between Kent and England at Lord's and in the county,

A. Mynn played . . .	32
Hillyer " . . .	32
Adams " . . .	25
Wenman " . . .	23
Felix " . . .	20
Martingell " . . .	20
Dorrington " . . .	17
W. Mynn " . . .	16

These men were all playing-together between 1839 and 1849, during which time Kent could hold her own with England, winning, as I said, nine matches to the ten won by England.

Hillyer was indeed a great acquisition. Kent having small choice of bowlers had now found a first-rate man in Hillyer to divide the work with Alfred Mynn. We must distinguish this great bowler as Alfred, because his brother Walter was also a valuable aid to the Kent Eleven. Mr. W. Mynn I heard say that Hillyer bowled in the most difficult style of any man of his day. If Lillywhite was rather more accurate, Hillyer's bowling was very fair, being as much lower than that of most others as Lillywhite's was higher. His delivery had, as a natural result, all the more spin. Spin and abrupt rise and shooters therefore characterised Hillyer's, as also Cobbett's bowling; Hillyer and Cobbett having the lowest and the most easy and graceful delivery of any men in my remembrance. Hillyer's bowling had also this great advantage, that it was faster than the average, while at the same time, which is very rare, the pace did not annihilate the bias of the ball. The ball, after pitching to the leg, would often cut right across the wicket, almost like Mr. Buchanan's; and this twist on a fast ball gives many a catch to the slips.

As to the slip required for Hillyer, the pity was he could not act two parts at the same time, for Hillyer was the best short-slip ever known—a capacity which he had many opportunities of displaying against Mr. A. Mynn's terrific bowling. Indeed it was most fortunate for the Kent Eleven that they had a man to do full justice to Mynn's fast bowling as slip as well as in wicket-keeping. The catches Mynn caused to the slips would have been lost with many other men than Hillyer.

Next to Hillyer, as to the difficulty of his bowling, of no man have I ever heard so much praise

as Buttress of Cambridge. 'Buttress,' said Fred Miller, 'could almost make the ball speak. I played him one match, and by him only I won for the United against the Parr's All-England Eleven. I offered Buttress five pounds if we won; but I had to commit him to the care of Caffyn to insure his remaining quite sober enough to bowl during the match.'

I well remember Buttress's bowling in that match as excellent indeed—the pace was rather slow, but the bias and the dodge very remarkable. William Hillyer played for Kent from 1835 to 1855. In the last season he fell and broke his thumb, and afterwards ceased to play, but commonly stood umpire in great matches, and died, like not a few professionals, of consumption in 1861. The Messrs. Mynn and Wilsner followed him to the grave.

William Martingell was the youngest of the Kent Eleven, being under twenty years of age when he first joined it. Still Parr played for All England at seventeen, and Mr. W. G. Grace as early; and I think I may add Daft to the list of young All-England men. Old Martingell, William's father, had been an old-fashioned bowler, who, like Fennex and some others of the old ones, gave such spin to a fast underhand ball as would grind the fingers against the bat. William Clarke's balls would also punish those who despised 'the slows' in the same way, and Clarke used to boast that he sent men back to the pavilion for their gloves to save their fingers.

W. Martingell made himself first known as a Surrey player, but being engaged under Fuller Pilch on the Kent ground he made rapid progress, and, though not quite a first-class bowler, he

was useful at the wicket almost in every match he played. His batting and fielding were both good, and he was one of the few good all-rounders. He was chosen by Clarke for his All-England Eleven. Such a player must undoubtedly have been valuable to Kent. Like some others I am happy to name of the professionals of that day, William Martingell was not only popular generally, but he was one of the humble friends of not a few of the gentlemen and patrons of the game. After a good engagement with Lord Ducis at Woodchester Park in Gloucestershire, he has ended with being a successful tutor to the Etonian Eleven.

Edward Wenman played for Kent twenty years, and had turned fifty-four before he retired. He was a very powerful man, of fifteen stone, and six feet in height, and well built. He was by trade a wheelwright and carpenter, at Benenden, in Kent. The Benenden Cricket Club was long celebrated, and supplied not a few players to the County Eleven. At Benenden, Wenman still lives, and is greeted with the greatest respect and friendship whenever he makes his appearance on a cricket ground. Wenman was valuable to his county as a captain and manager of a match second to none of his day; also, as nearly the best bat of his day; and Dean thinks he was equal to Lockyer or to any one he has ever seen as a wicket-keeper. 'His left hand was so very good,' said Dean; 'and you know, sir, a wicket-keeper gets very few chances if he can only stump with his right.'

Wenman's play was not with a long reach forward like Pilch, but more like Parr's style and that of the modern school. Wisden said Wenman's back play was the best

he had seen; and when once I saw him play Redgate's many shooters on Lord's, which then was hard like baked clay and as rough as the road, I thought him the most efficient man in a difficulty I had ever seen; though to Carpenter I have reason to award equal praise for the same style of play and play under difficulties.

Richard Mills was a great support to the Kent Eleven in its early days. I played with him as one of the Left hands against the Right at Lord's in 1838. He was a fair bat, very hard hitter, like most left-handed men, and one of the best bowlers of his day. He was one of the recruits from the Benenden Club. In 1834, Mills, with only Edward Wenman, played a strange match: those two against an eleven, and they won easily. His, Mills's bowling, however, was less required when Hillier joined; and Mills did not play with them after 1840. He was then forty-two years of age. He retired before the more glorious days of Kent.

John Gude Wenman was cousin of Edward Wenman: he was a fine left-handed bat, and capital field at long-slip or cover-point. He only played five matches out of the thirty-three.

Mr. Emilius Bayley, the same who scored 152 in the school match of Eton against Harrow at Lord's, played three matches with his county. He was worth playing for his batting, but he was better still in the field, either at long-leg or cover-point. So the Kentish field was strong at all points—though most of the men were rather sure and steady than quick, being past the age of great activity. Thirty is the extreme limit of quick fielding. The best fielding ever seen is in the Oxford and Cambridge matches, at least as regards quick fielding. Pro-

fessionals, from their unintermitting practice, are generally more sure and safe at a catch, but they are too mechanical, and rarely move till the ball is hit, and therefore cannot cover as much ground, and are rarely as good runners in the field, as gentlemen; as to running between wickets, the gentlemen generally beat the players by twenty per cent at least.

Edward Martin joined the Kent Eleven in 1845, and played with them till 1852, eight seasons. Though not young, being thirty-four years of age when he joined, he was accounted a most excellent field, especially at long-leg, and he was a free hard hitter. He once kept a cricketer's shop at Oxford, and there he secured the friendship of a wealthy collegian, who set him up in a farm at Leominster; after which Martin's history is one of those remarkable ones which every now and then tend to show that fact may be stranger than fiction.

Martin had kept on his Oxford shop while attempting to attend to his farm on the borders of Wales. Finding the two incompatible, he sold his stock, and with several hundred pounds of the proceeds in his pocket, he one morning left Worcester on a favourite horse. This was in the year 1849, and from that day to 1869—twenty years—nothing more was ever heard of him. But in November of that year a man fell from his horse and was killed, at Barcombe, near Lewes; and Martin's relatives were astounded by the news that he whom they had long lamented as probably robbed and murdered had lived unknown so many years, and might then be seen a corpse at the Royal Oak Inn of Barcombe. His papers had disclosed the address of his friends.

Edmund Hinkley was also one

of the Benenden recruits, a left-handed bowler as well as bat. His bowling for the last five seasons of the Kent and England matches was valuable indeed as a refresher to the failing powers of Kent; for Alfred Mynn was now past his best, and Hillyer wanted more assistance against the powerful bats of England than could be found in Martingell alone, whose bowling was not quite accurate enough for first-rate hitters, and never very difficult; but Hinkly's bowling was ripping indeed. He was rarely opposed to George Parr without getting his wicket. He bowled fast round-arm with much ease to himself—a good delivery with a break from the leg which was very destructive. Once, at Lord's, he took seven of the wickets of England in the first innings, and all in the second, though Hillyer bowled all the time—one of the most remarkable feats in the history of cricket. Hinkly honestly belonged to Kent, though his name will be found sometimes on the side of Surrey, because he once resided near the Oval.

Tom Adams is a name that heads, I think, every score of the Kent Eleven for twenty-five matches. In every match Adams went in first. As a severe and slashing hitter, he had thus the advantage of such loose balls as come before the bowlers have settled down to their work, and also, since free-hitting means guess-hitting, he could more easily guess the rise of the ball before the spikes had cut up the ground and made the spin of a Cobbett or a Redgate more effective still. With the bat he did his full share; his average was from 10 to 12 an innings; but his fielding was first-rate, and he was a very useful change bowler. He bowled on the left, and, consequently, over the wicket—a style that renders 'leg before wicket' easy to decide, though of proportionably rare occurrence, but at the same time the light is often obstructed and the player balked by the umpire; though the bowler loses the advantage of some of his bias and of a spin across the wicket.

(To be continued.)

THE STABLE SIDE OF MAYFAIR.

THE brilliancy of the spectacle presented by Rotten-row at the height of the season can scarcely be said to be due entirely to the assembling at that particular spot of the most charming and popular representatives of beauty, rank, and fashion. The jewel of itself may be perfection; but no one will deny that its splendour is immeasurably enhanced by the art of the goldsmith. The 'setting' is the great thing; and just as diamonds and sapphires are under obligations to the jeweller, so are beauty and fashion, when, separately or combined, they condescend to gladden the hearts and gratify the eyes of ordinary mortals by appearing in public, beholden to the coachmaker, the horse-dealer, and the manufacturer of servants' liveries. If coachmaking were an art unknown, and there were no horses, the 'Ladies' Mile' would be shorn of much of its magnificence. Sedans might make a pretty show, and chairmen be arrayed even so as to eclipse our Jeames and Chawles; but the bravery of the show would inevitably fall far short of that which we are accustomed to. The stately barouche, the elegant landau, the cosy brougham, the smart phaeton, each with its appropriate equine appointments, not to mention the superbly mounted horsewomen and horsemen, are all requisite to make perfect the present pleasing programme. Nor, bearing in mind the importance in every public display of upholstery and ornamentation, must the gay coachman on his driving-seat be forgotten; or the gorgeous liverymen, who serenely contem-

plate admiring spectators, from their post of honour, the monkey-board. They are part and parcel of the attractive 'turn-out.' Their coats are coloured in accordance with the hue of the cloth of which the carriage trimming is composed, and the silk incasement of their mighty calves matches to a shade the broad lace on the hammercloth and the picking out of the wheels and panels. There are a very large number of them. Reckoned all round, coachmen periwigged and plain, footmen in mufti and full-blown, pages youthful and adult, it is estimated that they would average two to each vehicle in the 'Row,' and of the latter may be counted any special day from two to three thousand. What becomes of these minor actors in the pageant, these 'supers' of the stage, when the play is over and the company dispersed? Mayfair, the nearest fashionable stronghold, requires the services, say, of a third of this outdoor servant army of six thousand, at least half of whom have no residence under the same roof with their employers. Where do the betagged and buttoned and bullioned menials find shelter when they are off duty? What becomes of the hundreds of gloriously arrayed coachmen in three-cornered hats, some of them; and knee-breeches, and powdered heads, and coats of many colours? They presently turn the heads of the costly horses in a homeward direction, see their precious freight safely delivered back to the harbour from which it was launched, and then—where do they go, and what do they do? Mayfair is no

longer a place for them; they could not procure private lodgings in that exclusive neighbourhood for six times their wages. Is there a convenient 'house of call' for them somewhere handy, where they divest themselves of their theatrical trappings, and, assuming the modest garb of mere private individuals, tramp home to the Tottenham-court-road or Marylebone, where house-rent is cheap, and where they can eke out their 'off duty' time, as the postmen do, in mending shoes or in tailoring? And now that one comes to give the subject a moment's thought, there must be a very considerable number of other persons besides coachmen who have no visible means of existence, but without whose assistance the high-steppers and the mettlesome prancers would go ungroomed, and the carriage panels present an appearance very different from the present. Where are the Mayfair stablemen, the helpers and understrappers, such as find employment in every well-appointed news? One way or another there should be several thousand persons, married men with their families possibly, who depend for their daily sustenance on Mayfair patronage, and who at the same time have a domestic existence quite separate. Where is this colony of outdoor 'helps'? Somebody whispers, 'Find out Shepherd's-market, and you will be in its midst.'

The stranger in London in quest of Shepherd's-market would find it a matter of no small difficulty to discover that secluded place of public barter. That valuable chart of topographical information, the *Post-office Directory* map, which frankly declares the whereabouts of every other market in the metropolis, is strangely silent respecting that

one to which Shepherd lends his name. Distinctly enough are indicated Covent-garden, Farringdon, the New Cattle, Smithfield, and Oxford Markets. Even that disgracefully squalid and ill-conditioned poor relation of the market family, which is christened 'Clare,' is not forgotten; but with Shepherd's-market the map deals not, nor deigns to designate the not insignificant area it occupies. It is difficult to believe that this is accidental. Perhaps by a fiction of the laws of fashion there is no such place as a vulgar market within the patrician precincts of Mayfair. Maybe the reverential 'chartist'—to use an Americanism—in his topographical survey, was so overcome by the outrageous iniquity of fish, flesh, and fowl hucksters and vendors of low greengrocery, squatting down, as it were, on the very skirts of the aristocracy, that he passed by the offensive locality with his eyes cast skyward or with his pocket-handkerchief covering his grieved optics. Anyhow he failed to make a note of the market's existence. For the information of the curious, however, it may be stated that Shepherd's-market is to be found at the heart and centre of a square that has for its sides Curzon-street, Berkeley-square, Park-lane, and Mount-street, and that it may be approached from Pica-dilly or from Park-lane, the latter by means of a hole in the wall and a flight of steep stone steps and a narrow high-walled passage. Ineed not, however, be so very particular in describing how Shepherd's-market may be arrived at by the public at large. It is more than possible that those who, by favour and patronage of the high and mighty, are permitted to set up their booths in the fair of May would much rather be left alone in that snug and lucrative seclusion they have

solongenjoyed. There are markets and markets, and the misguided individual who attempted to invade the domain of Shepherd in that free-and-easy frame of mind with which he would betake himself to make a purchase at the markets of Newport or Oxford would speedily be aware of the mistake he had made.

The popular idea of a market-place is one that in a manner combines the wholesale and the retail, to the advantage of the buyer who brings his ready penny in his hand, and appreciates the spirited policy of 'small profits and quick returns.' A market is a place for bustle and excitement, where every vendor endeavours to cry his wares louder than his neighbour, and by making as much display and noise as possible to attract a share of custom to his shop. But this kind of thing is foreign to Shepherd's-market. The tradesmen there are as decorous in their behaviour and as quiet and demure in appearance as though their business premises were kitchen offices of the 'family' up-stairs. In every other London market may be discovered a contingent of the ragged and famished juvenile army of market prowlers; but I much question if the boldest tatterdemalion even of Covent-garden would dare show his face within a mile of Curzon-street after his first and last interview with the beadle to whom the mythical Shepherd deposes authority. Only that it would of course be highly improper to treat with anything like levity a subject of such gravity, one might imagine a very funny picture of a blundering butcher, or greengrocer, or fishmonger, of the Leather-lane market type, hearing of a Shepherd's-market shop being vacant, and, accepting the fact of its being a 'market,' as sufficient for his

purpose, embarking in business there. He would of course consult no one as to the style in which he should open the premises. In the narrow thoroughfare which leads through from Holborn-hill to Liquorpond-street and the back slums of Saffron-hill he had a way of his own—a profitable and an eminently satisfactory way—and he has yet to learn that what is good for Leather-lane will not be found equally acceptable by the 'West-enders.' It is scarcely likely, even were he disposed to listen to the same, that he would receive any useful hints from the blue-frocked fraternity of Shepherds (I am supposing the intruder to be a butcher). Tradesmen on whom the noblest in the land rely for part of their daily aliment would regard it as scarcely consistent with their dignity to consort with a coarse person accustomed probably to conduct his business from the exterior instead of the interior of the shop; to stand bareheaded perhaps on the pavement, clashing his knife and steel, and roaring out 'Buy, buy!' to a crowd of costermonger customers. Propriety forbid! At certain taverns,—'houses of call' for bakers,—there is a select room for the use especially of the 'fancy' members of the trade, while the ordinary members, the 'common squares' or 'bricks,' would think twice before they risked losing caste by being seen in familiar converse with a low-priced Mr. Doughy who keeps a 'tommy shop' in a poor neighbourhood. It is scarcely likely, therefore, that a man of scrags and low-quality beef from Leather-lane would find a cordial welcome in Shepherd's-market. They could not well interfere to prevent the threatened outrage. The vestry, if applied to, would be helpless in the matter, there being no act of parliament prohibiting a

butcher from conducting his honest business in the way that best pleased him. Meanwhile the butcher from Leather-lane would cheerfully proceed with his arrangements for what he would call a 'spanking' opening day. He would employ the gas-fitter to provide the whole length of the shop-front with the piping and burners for a brilliant illumination; he would have meat-hooks fixed as high on the front wall as could be utilised by the aid of a six-foot 'long arm;' he would have all ready prepared for the opening day a select assortment of those painted tickets he has hitherto found to be so attractive: 'The nobby shoulders at eight and a half!' 'Carrots are in—salt beef at sevenpence!' &c. As a climax he probably would hire a brass band to occupy the front room over the shop, and play a selection of the liveliest airs with both windows open. Then at a given signal the band would strike up its brazen loudest to the tune of 'Tommy, make room for your uncle' (not so much as being *apropos* to the occasion as that it may be interpreted as taking the form of a good-humoured appeal on the part of the new-comer to his fellow-tradesmen), the shutters would be lowered, the butcher's leather-lunged assistants banging their cleavers against the chopping blocks, roaring aloud, 'Hi, hi! Be in time, ladies! Hi, hi, hi! The rosy meat, fresh as paint and cheap as dirt! Hi, hi!' with noise enough to rouse the whole immediate neighbourhood. It would require a pen more graphic than mine to describe the consternation the stunning uproar would occasion. Powdered heads and aghast visages would be hastily thrust out at the back-windows of all the adjacent family mansions, while from a hundred pale lips would issue the

momentous question, 'What on herth's the matter?' Coachmen's and stablemen's wives from the neighbouring mews would come swarming out, not with the object of 'being in time,' as invited, but prepared to see Shepherd's-market in flames, and the fire-engines clattering in over the cobble-stones. 'Nobody gathers round' to regard the 'rosy meat,' none step up to avail themselves of 'shoulders' and 'legs' cheap as dirt and fresh as paint; wondering groups gather at the distant street-corners, and grooms and horse-tenders come hurrying out of the public-houses to see what the row is about, and from a distance contemplate in stark wonderment the bewildering innovation, and whisper and shrug their shoulders apprehensively as they discuss what Berkeley-square will think of such a vulgar hubbub, or what steps Mount-street will take to put it down. Perhaps, after an agitated consultation, a deputation of the plush brotherhood would make bold to proceed in a body to Mr. Shortribs' shop, and point out to him the impropriety of his proceeding; suggesting to that tradesman that he really should have some regard for the high respectability of the locality into which by some mistake he had made his way. I am afraid that such a movement would not mend matters, Mr. Shortribs being a man of bulk, and of pugnacious propensities when he is put out. He is put out now. The fact of the new shop having been already open for nearly three hours, with the brass band playing unceasingly, and the three young men in front hard at it, 'Hi-hi'-ing and clashing their knives and steels without a single joint being disposed of, has revealed to Mr. Shortribs that for once his judgment is at fault, and that Shepherd's-market is no place for

him. It is well if the plush deputation does not announce itself at the identical moment when the disagreeable conviction mentioned first forces itself on the disappointed butcher's mind.

Nor is it the butcher portion alone of the shopkeeping brotherhood of this pink and flower of markets that differs so widely from his kindred of less refined regions. It is perhaps not surprising to find that the fishmongers of the stable side of Mayfair are men of dignified presence, or that they wear black coats in their business and well-brushed chimneypot hats. There always are 'upper ten' amongst fishmongers. But here the prevailing atmosphere of high gentility affects greengrocers and cheesemongers and poulterers as well. No one makes any display of his goods, 'market' though it is supposed to be. The poulterer reads the *Times* in the snug little counting-house within his shop, or lounges in an elegantly indolent manner at his shop-door, well knowing that he is as little likely to be called on by a chance customer as he is to be made ranger of the adjacent park. His is as much a 'bespoke' trade as that of a Bond-street bootmaker, and he probably knows the destination of every hare, pheasant, and partridge on his premises. He need not trouble himself as to the state of trade and market fluctuation; if the latter in its erratic flights even topped his, the Mayfair poulterer's, fixed retail tariff, why, he will be content to abide by the loss. There is nothing like coarseness, no rough dirty-handedness that savours of sending out coals, in the greengrocer of Mayfair stabledom. He necessarily has boys to carry out his wares, but they are not common boys, but good little lads; William and Henry and Joseph, who never fail

to call him 'sir,' who never whistle in the streets or sport upon their errands, and who act always in strict compliance with the rule that it is instant and ignominious discharge without a character to pass an upper servant or a butler without touching their cap. I looked about, but could not find the chimney-sweep's abode; but possibly he is in private residence, and if I had more particularly searched I might have discovered him dwelling in a modest but well-appointed abode, with two neatly inscribed bell-plates on either side of his door, the one 'Orders,' the other 'Visitors.' I did find the Mayfair rag-shop. Not by means of the black doll which hung out in front of the premises, however, or by the window beplastered with flaming placards, wherein was set forth, by the medium of highly-coloured picture and execrable poetry, the many advantages to be derived by patronising that particular establishment, foremost of which was the world-renowned probity and disinterestedness of the shopkeeper. A black doll, indeed! Was there so much even as an announcement that

* This is the shop your fat and bones to
take,
You'll get good prices here, and no
mistake!

Was the shop-window a dirty window, with its panes showing old rags and tailors' cuttings and doctors' bottles and horse-hair? Was there exhibited amongst these articles of unsightly litter a broken pan containing oleaginous shapes of strange mould, ticketed 'Good beef dripping, eightpence a pound'? It might as well be asked was there a second-hand shoe-shop or the stock-in-trade of a catameat dealer anywhere visible. No; the purging influence of a noble atmosphere is not lost on one whose

humble vocation is to deal in kitchen refuse, and who has on the premises scales for weighing bones and rags and kitchen stuff. On the premises, but not visible to the passer-by. I at first took the place for a surgery, possibly of some doctor of eminence in the neighbourhood. It was in a narrow way, it is true, but its plate-glass windows were stained of a sober brown, and its curtained half-glass door was closed. Over the door was a tasteful lamp bearing simply the inscription 'General Merchant.' It was not until you more closely approached the premises that you discovered a few elegantly devised tablets hung from the inner sash, like pictures, and which bore announcements to the effect that kitchen stuff was purchased there, that wax and sperm ends might now be disposed of, and that the proprietor was not unwilling to negotiate for rags or left-off clothing. I did not see the proprietor, at least not to say positively that it was he. I did see a grave elderly gentleman in a well-cut suit of dark tweed and a soft felt hat enter at the curtained door, and close it after him just as though he lived there, but he wore spurs and carried a riding-whip under his arm. He did not look as though he had candle-ends about him, but for all that he might have been a customer. Or he might have been the present general merchant's father, retired and now living in Park-lane, who had just looked in to see how business was going on. Or, again, he might have been some titled personage of noble lineage, but with a slender banking account, who was making up to the general merchant's daughter and the handsome dowry with which that prosperous trader intended to endow her on her marriage-day.

But what of the Mayfair stable

population? Where the hundreds of coachmen and yard-helpers and harness-cleaners when horses and carriages are in close quarters? The latter, at all events, are not a very refined race, but, as commonly discovered, of rather a rough and uncouth breed, given at leisure time to a negligent toilet, and to the consumption of beer out of pewter measures, and of tobacco out of short pipes, at the bar of the public-house. There should be tap-rooms in which they play dominoes and cribbage with unclean packs of cards, and skittle-alleys from whence proceed the sound of nine-pins briskly 'floored' by the deftly-delivered ball. There should, if Mayfair stablemen be as others are, be seen untidy women—their wives—gossiping at street-doors and street-corners, and budding promises of future stablemen playing at horses or making mud-pies in the gutters. Nothing of the kind, however, is visible in this select locality. Stables there are on every side and in every turning: establishments of great 'job masters,' containing stalls enough to accommodate the horses of a regiment, and employing, some of them, a hundred hands or more; and private stables, ranging the whole length of long streets, the many rooms of which are occupied by the horse-tenders and the carriage-washers and their families; but the whole neighbourhood is orderly and quiet as the dullest part of Brompton on a Sunday afternoon. The close proximity of the great houses by which the abodes of these humble folk are overshadowed seems to have an awe-inspiring effect on them, and the merry children, with delightfully clean pinafores and hair brushed as sleek as horse-hide, comport themselves, even when engaged in their wildest of outdoor games, as though perpetually oppressed by

the parental injunction, 'Hush! don't make a noise, whatever you do,' and refrain from hallooing and whooping, as it is their nature to, lest they should rouse the ire of some one in authority who is empowered to command their instant banishment. Not that the parents of the children are left unassisted to bring up the latter in the way they should go. The hidden hand of strict discipline is likewise the hand of bounty; and there is provided in their midst a school-house, handsome and commodious. Up an alley in a corner is a mission-room, where seriously-inclined coachmen and helpers and their wives no doubt pass many edifying evenings.

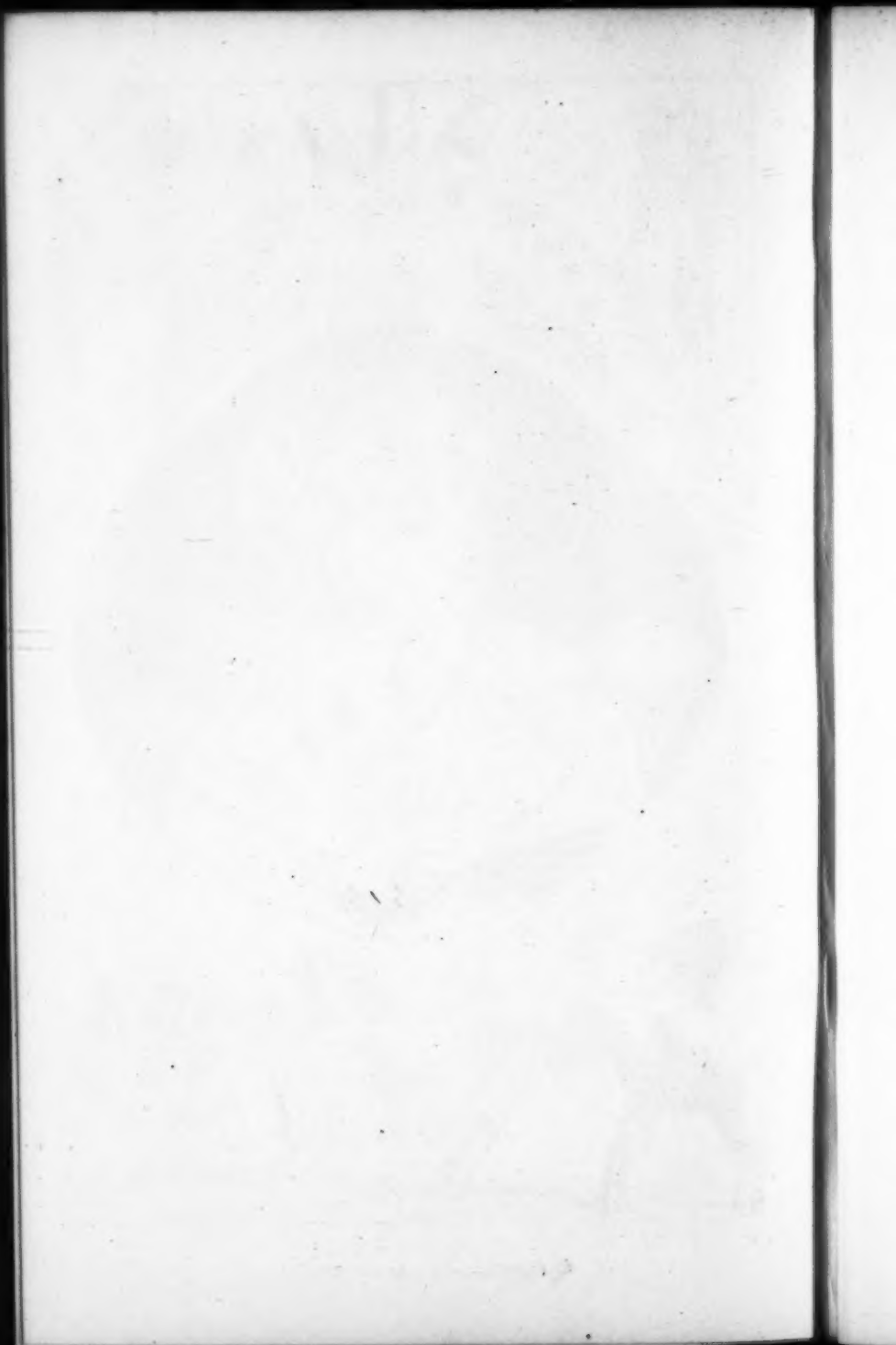
The rough-and-ready stableman appears to have no existence on this the 'seamy side' of Mayfair. Indeed, the seams are pressed so rigorously flat that the most sensitive policeman might pass his hand over them without discovering any amount of roughness to complain of; that is to say, if that which I saw was a fair sample of the behaviour of even the lowest grade of the male population. No wooden-clouted clowns clattering distractingly over the cobble-stones, with hay bands for leggings, and their patched unmentionables girdled at the waist by means of the pertaining braces. Nothing visible anywhere but the most scrupulous tidiness and neatness. Even the wheelbarrow-trundlers (I did not look to see if these vehicles were provided with

india-rubber tires to render them noiseless) were spick and span young fellows, with black boots and drab gaiters and natty tweed jackets, and looked as though ready, at a moment's notice, to slip into a livery-coat and a pair of Berlin gloves and mount the driving-seat. Bad language was not to be heard. Whether it is the purity of the atmosphere that insures a voluntary abandonment of that coarse conversation not uncommonly to be heard amongst men of stable connections, or whether the stern rules and regulations of the place insist on it, is not easy to say, but certainly, in the course of an hour's exploration, I heard no one swear.

On the whole, I must admit that I quitted Shepherd's-market a wiser and, I trust, a better man. I am not ashamed to confess that my political tendencies have hitherto been Liberal, not to say Radical. I have spoken lightly of those who by hereditary right sit in lordly authority over us; and, I believe, more than once have gone even to the length of declaring my conviction that it would be possible for England to exist without the annual publication of Lodge's *Peerage*. I ask permission to withdraw that rash opinion; it was delivered in ignorance. Since I have discovered the chastening effect the mere shadow of a mighty aristocracy has on the people, I will never again object to its bodily presence, or question the wisdom of its ways.



THE MODERN ZODIAC:
AN ARTIST'S ALMANAC OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.



THE ROMANCE OF OLD LONDON.

NO. III. A MEMORY OF OLD LONDON BRIDGE.

THE grandson of my friend, Tom Darts,
Returning by the train that starts
From Cannon-street five-twenty-threes,
But yesterday I chanced to see.
A lad he is just turn'd eighteen ;
Clear cut his face, and grave his mien.
His coat and gloves were fresh and new,
A faultless tie of Navy blue
Beneath his collar richly set ;
Tall was his hat, and black as jet.
No smile had he upon his face,
But calm he look'd, without a trace
Of feeling, either sad or gay ;
And not one word had he to say,
Nor time to lose in idle chat :
Too precious all his hours for that.
No sooner in the carriage seated
(Cool among others overheated)
Than, with an air of sapient calm,
A book he from beneath his arm
Drew quietly ; and both his eyes
He fix'd, and read with look so wise,
So unperturbed by rushing trains,
I envied him his steady brains.
Nor was it foolish fiction light
Engaged his mind ; but hematite
And iron ores—no doubt a cram
For some competitive exam.
And here I own, that though I can
Confront with ease a brother man,
Nor fear the face of good or bad,
I quail before *The Modern Lad*.
And though there's many an F.R.S.
I might without alarm address,
I fear me that my heart would fail,
And e'en my very lips grow pale,
If, looking from the awful height
Of all the 'ologies, through light
Of science in these learned days,
That boy should criticise my lays.
And yet I like the lad, though he
Affrights me so ; for oft I see
A something in his fair young face
That helps me once again to trace
The features of one dead and gone,

Who long has slept beneath a stone
 In country grave-yard quietly.
 He was a boy along with me,
 And he and I we toil'd together,
 And breasted storms in boisterous weather,
 When we were men ; and help'd to cheer
 Each other as each passing year
 Robbed us of some we held most dear.
 Yes, boys were boys when we were young ;
 We ran and laugh'd and wagg'd our tongue !
 I look'd across the glossy ridge
 Of that lad's hat, and saw the bridge*
 We used to play on cross the tide
 (For fancy ever is keen-eyed)
 Between St. Olave's tower square
 And old St. Magnus' lantern fair.
 Ah, that old bridge ! I see it still,
 Its many arches, mended ill ;
 Its coffer-dam and water-wheel ;
 Its cover'd alcoves, where we'd steal
 O' nights some ' Charley'† to awaken,
 And run away with laughter shaken.
 The grandsire of that reading lad
 Was Darts ; who ne'er an hour had
 Of liberty but I and he
 Were always off upon some spree.
 What games we had, we two young dogs,
 When children, running o'er the logs
 That used to lie, with other wares,
 Close by the shore, at Old Swan Stairs !
 And many a time we tumbled in,
 And got well wetted to the skin ;
 And once, when we were older grown,
 We jump'd into a boat alone,
 And started from Fresh-wharf. The tide
 Was running strong ; we vainly tried
 To ' shoot the bridge ;' but such a fall
 The other side the arches small
 There was, our boat at once was toss'd
 Keel upwards : we were all but lost.
 My strength too soon began to fail ;
 I'd ne'er been here to tell the tale
 Had not Darts held with all his might
 Me to the sterlings,‡ till our plight
 Was seen from off the wharf, and we,
 Half dead, were rescued happily.

* The old bridge crossed the river near St. Olave's, Tooley-street (the church with the square clock-tower seen when leaving London-bridge Station for Cannon-street), to St. Magnus', Fish-street-hill (the church with the lantern-tower on the City side).

† The Charlies were the watchmen before the introduction of the new police. They were generally men of venerable age. To 'knock over a Charley's sleeping-box' was a favourite diversion of youth in the bad old times.

‡ Sterlings—the boat-like wooden foundations on which the stone piers of the old bridge rested.

Scarce any day its hours went round
But in the river there was drown'd
Some luckless wight, such risk of life
On wave and shore there then was rife ;
So that—although I own I smarted
When that old bridge and I were parted,
And it was long ere I could view
With friendliness or love the new—
Yet, though I saw it go with pain,
I never wish it back again.
But many a crowded century
Must pass o'er this ere it can be
As rich in history, song, or praise,
As London-bridge of olden days.
The history of the English nation
From London-bridge to yonder station
At Cannon-street is all compress'd ;
The half of which, and that the best,
The old bridge shared ; therefore, to tell
All that at any time befell
That ancient place would tax a scribe,
Who should the powers of all his tribe
Combine. Whose knowledge, quaint and ripe,
Might rival Hollingshed or Strype,
Or old John Stow ; while, like Macaulay
Or T. Carlyle, or Froude or Morley,
With vivid colours in his pen,
He'd fill again with living men
The bridge ; nor any worthy thing,
From days of Colechurch* to the king
Who last possess'd the English crown,
Would fail to set in order down.
Not mine the pen nor mine the task ;
I only humbly of you ask
That you, who pass that tower square
In Tooley street, and lantern fair
Perceive beyond the river there,
And know these churches bear the names
Of Northern heroes of whose claims
To memory here you stand in doubt,
Would let me try to help you out.

L. ALLDRIDGE.

(To be continued as 'KING OLAF'S VICTORY.')

* The first stone bridge was begun by Peter of Colechurch, 1176, and although frequent repairs left but little of the original structure, no entirely new bridge ever took its place until the present one was erected, during the last reign, on a fresh site, by Sir James Rennie.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

MINERAL PIGMENTS, AND THEIR RELATION TO HEALTH.

THE injuries to health caused by the use of lead pigments, such as white-lead, red-lead, chromate of lead (chrome yellow), orange chrome, &c., for all sorts of domestic purposes, are far more serious than is commonly supposed, small particles of these substances being continually liable to be introduced into the system along with food, and inhaled as dust mechanically abraded from painted objects, and suspended in the air. So much is this the case that, were any efficient substitutes for these deleterious compounds practically available, there would not be wanting advocates to insist on the compulsory avoidance of their use—at any rate, for numerous purposes for which they are at present employed. The same kind of argument applies, *à fortiori*, to the brilliant but horribly noxious vivid-green colouring matters prepared from copper and arsenic compounds, and technically known by various names, such as Scheele's green, emerald green, Schweinfurth's green, &c., according to difference in shade, produced by differences in the mode of their production. The almost inconceivable stupidity which allows a pigment of this dangerous nature to be freely used for all sorts of purposes and objects which would render it likely to be brought in contact with the human frame, stomach, or lungs, is only matched by the equally remarkable ignorance of the ordinary public of the dangers to which they are thus unnecessarily exposed. Not only

is this substance to be met with in wall-papers, from which the pigment is liable to be detached in large quantities during dusting, &c., or even by casually brushing against the wall, but it is often found in alarming quantities in the artificial flowers and leaves, &c., frequently used for ladies' head-dresses, &c., and occasionally is the tinting material in sea-green muslins and tarletans. Indeed cases are on record where milliners, seamstresses, artificial-flower makers, and even the sellers of the articles, have been afflicted with all the symptoms of arsenical poisoning from the mere inhalation of dust dislodged from such fabrics during their making up into dresses, &c., or whilst packing and unpacking the boxes containing them; and the dust collected in a comparatively quiet corner of a crowded ballroom has been found to be heavily charged with particles of arsenical compounds mechanically shaken off from the ladies' dresses, &c., during the exercise of dancing. The old Romans and other inhabitants of Italy did not employ pigments of this noxious character—at any rate, to the extent that we more civilised nations think proper, notwithstanding our arrays of sanitary officers and inspectors. Thus a chemical examination of various colouring matters and pigments found in Pompeii has been recently made by Signor P. Palmieri; most of these substances, although so long buried, are yet of such a nature as to have undergone little or no change. Three of the yellows were found to be natural ochreous minerals, the

shades being altered and softened by the admixture of white clay, gypsum, or chalk. One green pigment, and one only, contained copper; another consisted of oxide of iron, carbonate of lime, silica, and alumina, and was in all probability the substance alluded to by Pliny under the name of 'terra verde' ('Sunt etiamnum novitii duo colores et vilissimi; viride quod Appianum vocatur . . . fit et ex creta viridi'). Five substances of red or brownish-red shades were found to be simply ochres; another substance was a mixture of a number of particles of various kinds; whilst a rose-coloured pigment appeared to consist of a white clay (mixed with a little chalk and phosphate of lime), saturated with an organic colouring matter more stable in its power of resisting bleaching agents, such as chlorine and bromine, than either madder or cochineal. From various statements of Pliny, conjoined with the results of the chemical examination of this substance, Signor Palmieri concludes that it was probably a compound colour derived from the Tyrian purple (from *murex* or *purpura*), madder, and the colouring matter of the kermes (or cochineal-like parasite of the *quercus coccifera*), this organic mixture being made to saturate a white clay, so as to produce an extremely stable and fast kind of lake. Not only, however, do we continue to employ lead, copper, and arsenic compounds freely in the decorations of our houses (not to hint at the occasional use of bismuth and lead compounds in 'blanc de perles,' hair-dyes, and other so-called 'toilette requisites'), but new processes for preparing these and suchlike bodies more cheaply are from time to time invented. Thus a considerable saving of cost in the manufacture of white-lead by a new process has been

recently announced by Messrs. Fitzgerald & Molloy, the pigment being in this case made direct from the lead ore by a succession of complex chemical processes, instead of being (as in the old 'Dutch' method) manufactured from metallic lead previously smelted from the ore and carefully refined. On the other hand, the energies of chemists have been long bent in the endeavour to prepare on a large scale pigments which can compete in tint and other essential qualities with these poisonous metallic preparations, and in some instances with a fair amount of success. Thus of late a series of colours have been prepared from what used to be regarded as a rare metal—tungsten, which, however, turns out to be more widely distributed and more cheaply attainable than was supposed. That yellows, blues, and greens of dull shades were obtainable from the natural compounds of this metal by sundry chemical processes has indeed been known for years; but only recently have they been obtained in a commercial form in quantity and of quality admitting of their practical employment. Specimens of these new varieties of pigments of fine tint and of permanent qualities, prepared by Dr. Versmann by new processes, were recently exhibited to those interested in such matters, as illustrative of a lecture on this subject delivered at the Royal Institution by Dr. Alder Wright. From the same sources tungsten-white, a substitute for white-lead, is also derived, although as yet it has hardly been prepared of such quality as to be equal to the best white-lead. Heavy spar, or barytes, when suitably purified, and especially when prepared by certain chemical processes, forms another rival; hardly, however, equal to good white-lead as a pigment, although possessing,

like tungsten-white, the great advantages of being non-poisonous, and of not discolouring in the air. The cheapness of this substance, by the way, often leads to its being used to mix with genuine white-lead, the effect of this adulteration being, unlike that of most similar practices, rather conducive to the health and benefit of the party imposed on than the reverse. Again, an oxide of zinc known as *zinc white* has been largely recommended as a comparatively harmless substitute (though by no means altogether wholesome) for white-lead; whilst recently Professor Barff brought before the notice of the Society of Arts a new process for preparing an analogous zinc pigment, containing sulphur combined with zinc, as *zinc sulphide*. Zinc, indeed, is only comparatively uninjurious: some of its compounds are medicinally employed on account of their emetic and purgative properties; but it is a poison of a far less active nature than lead, and in particular differs from lead in not being what is termed *cumulative*—that is, in not accumulating in the system for months or years when imbibed in very minute quantities, and finally producing an action due to the total sum of the small amounts thus gradually introduced. One use of zinc compounds that has been met with of late is, however, especially to be reprobated—viz. their incorporation with indiarubber goods, such as the feeding-bottle tubes for infants, or the gum-rings, &c., intended for the delectation of teething babies. Specimens of such vulcanised-rubber articles have been examined, which contained upwards of half their weight of oxide of zinc; and cases of sickness and illness on the part of children have been noticed, brought about by their sucking toys, &c., made of rubber thus prepared.

GERMAN SILVER.

The term German silver has long been applied to an alloy or mixture of metals consisting of copper, nickel, and zinc, the name being derived from the use of such a composition for the lower currency of some of the *ci-devant* German States. When the red metal copper is alloyed with from one-third to one-fifth of its weight of the white metal zinc, a more or less yellow alloy is formed, known as brass when full yellow, but called by various other names (*e.g.* tombak, similar, pinchbeck, Mannheim gold, &c.), according to the precise composition and shade. If, however, to this yellow alloy a certain amount of the white metal nickel is added, the whole becomes white or yellowish white, without materially losing the special qualities which render brass so useful a substance in the manufacture of a thousand and one articles of common use; in particular the ternary alloy of copper, zinc, and nickel is, when the ingredients are duly proportioned, easily melted into ingots, rolled into plates, and punched, cut, or stamped into any required form; whilst the articles made from it possess sufficient rigidity to be bent out of shape, dented, or otherwise deformed, only with some considerable difficulty. Moreover this composition possesses the valuable quality of firmly adhering to a coating of silver deposited on its surface by suitable electrical means; *i.e.* an electro-silvered article, the basis of which is German silver, will not readily allow of the silver being peeled or stripped off by ordinary hard usage, in this respect having a considerable advantage over electro-silvered articles made from various other alloys, and even over the old-fashioned Sheffield plate, made by soldering together a block of copper and a

thin strip of silver, rolling out the compound mass into a sheet, so that a thin coating of silver overlays a comparatively large thickness of copper, and finally fashioning this compound sheet into the articles required. The earlier alloys used for electro-silvering when the art was first practised were not so proportioned as to give a white composition, the mixture (consisting of about eight parts copper, three of zinc, and two of nickel) being often decidedly yellow, or becoming so on exposure to air; whenever the edges of the plated article got a little worn, so that the silver was abraded, the yellow underlying metal became visible. The alloy now used for the best electro-plate, however, is so proportioned that the yellow shade is much less strongly marked; so that in consequence, even if the silver coating be worn off here and there, the fact is not readily discernible unless on close inspection. The proportion of nickel in this alloy is somewhat greater, and that of copper somewhat less, than in the yellower metal, and technically the term German silver is often restricted to the yellow metal, the whiter composition being generally designated as *argentan*, *albata*, *electrum*, &c. The price of nickel is subject to considerable fluctuation, and this to a great extent interferes with the use of alloys containing this substance, a manufacturer who has speculated in a large quantity of nickel at a high price being liable to considerable losses should the price rapidly fall. Recently it has been found that the power of nickel to whiten brass without materially interfering with its useful physical qualities is shared by various other metals. Thus a new substitute for German silver has been lately brought out by Messrs. Biermann & Clodius of

Hanover, consisting essentially of an alloy of copper, zinc, and manganese; *i.e.* this new alloy is German silver, in which the nickel is replaced by manganese. It is, however, difficult in practice to manufacture manganese free from iron, so that the new alloy usually contains a little of this fourth metal in addition: a specimen that possessed only a slight yellow tint, bore a fine polish, and remained unaffected by immersion in water for forty days, was found to consist of about four parts zinc, eight manganese, and thirty-four copper, to one of iron. An analogous alloy, containing the metal hitherto regarded as somewhat rare—tungsten—has also been recently brought out by Dr. Versmann, who has succeeded in cheapening the price at which tungsten can be procured so as to render it commercially available. This tungsten German silver (containing copper, zinc, and tungsten) is characterised by the possession of considerable sonority, a plate or bar of it suspended by a thread and struck by a hammer emitting a clear ringing note.

LIGHTING BY ELECTRICITY.

When a combustible body burns in such a way as to give light, only a very minute portion of the energy generated by the combustion makes its appearance as light; so much so, that it is possible to obtain a much greater illumination by the expenditure of a given quantity of oil, &c., by making the heat evolved by the combustion work an engine, which in turn drives a magneto-electric machine, and employing the electric current thus produced to give rise to the electric light by passing between two carbon points separated by a small space. Thus it has been shown by Professor Anthony of Cornell University that the light obtained by the direct combustion of petro-

leum in an ordinary lamp is much less than that produced if the same oil be used as fuel to drive the magneto-electric machine. The electric light produced by means of a 5-horse Brayton petroleum-oil engine was found to be equal to that developed by 234 petroleum lamps burning jointly 16 lbs. of oil per hour; the engine, however, only consumed $6\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of oil per hour, so that the electric-light arrangement gave rise to about $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as much light from a given quantity of oil as that produced by direct combustion in a lamp. The chief difficulty in the way of utilising electricity as a source of light has hitherto been the cost of generating the electric current; and when an ordinary voltaic battery is employed, the cost of the zinc and chemicals consumed is without doubt much more than that of the ordinary gas or candles required to give the same illuminating power. It would, however, seem that by using gas as a motive power an actual economy would result were the electric light substituted for ordinary illuminating agents in large rooms, &c., requiring powerful luminous appliances. Dr. Siemens recently pointed out in his presidential address to the Iron and Steel Institute that the vast natural stores of energy, provided by waterfalls and by the tide, could easily be made to work turbines, &c., and so generate almost any required electrical current; thus the mechanical force of the Falls of Niagara is equivalent to that generated by the yearly consumption of 266,000,000 tons of coal, taking the height at 150 feet, and assuming, as has been estimated, that 100 millions of tons of water are precipitated over the cataract every hour. Sir William Armstrong has taught us how to carry high-pressure mains to considerable

distances, whilst at Schaffhausen and other places on the Continent power is transmitted to a spot two miles distant by means of quick-working steel ropes passing over large pulleys. It would not, therefore, be necessary that the motive power required to drive an engine should be actually utilised on the spot, as it might be thus conveyed to more convenient localities at some considerable distance in case of necessity. From the magneto-electric machine, wherever set up, copper conductors of suitable size would convey powerful electric currents to considerably greater distances, where the electricity could be utilised to give light; thus a copper rod, three inches in diameter, would suffice to transmit the electricity generated by a machine requiring 1000 horse-power to a distance of thirty miles, where it would generate light to the extent of a quarter of a million candle-power, which would suffice to illuminate a moderately-sized town. Even in many districts remote from the sea, and from waterfalls or rivers, it would be possible to generate powerful electrical currents by the burning of many substances now entirely wasted. In colliery districts shales and inferior coal could readily be partially burnt, as proposed by Dr. Siemens years ago, at the bottom of the shafts, and the combustible gases thus produced led up the shafts and to some further distance, if need be, through the ascending power of the hot gases, which might then be directly used for the ordinary purposes of fuel or employed to generate electricity; whilst much vegetable and other combustible refuse accumulating in our dustbins might be utilised for the same kind of purpose. Lignite, peat, and other substances of small value as fuel, when burnt directly, can be readily used as gas-producers

in Siemens' generators, and thus rendered available for diminishing our yearly drafts on our rapidly diminishing stores of coal.

PROTECTION AGAINST FIRE.

In the United States about eight-tenths per cent (80 cents per \$100) of the total value of combustible property are annually destroyed by fire; in Europe the ratio is only about one-third of this. The loss occasioned by fires that could be readily extinguished, were suitable appliances on the spot shortly after the outbreak, is a very considerable percentage on the total amount, and consequently great efforts are now being made to diminish the time required to bring engines, &c., on the spot after the alarm of fire is given. In New York, Berlin, and some other towns a system of telegraphs for the purpose of communicating fire-alarms to the central stations has been for some time in use; the effect of which is considerably to diminish the number of serious fires that take place annually, by enabling engines and men to be on the spot rapidly, and so to prevent the increase in virulence of the fire to a point too great to be readily stopped. Such a system has not yet been introduced into England, and as a result the percentage of 'serious' fires that occurred in London during the years 1873, 1874, and 1875 was upwards of 10, whilst in Berlin it only amounted to less than 3; a serious fire meaning one for the extinction of which more than two engines are requisite. The telegraphs consist of an apparatus fixed at street-corners, in pillar-boxes or in other ways, so as to guard against accidental or wilful damage. This apparatus is protected by a glass front, and when an alarm is to be given the glass is opened or broken, and a handle pulled;

this communicates motion to certain appliances, whereby a signal is sent by means of electricity to the central station. To guard against the chance of derangement of this apparatus, the signal is transmitted by the rupture of a current which is always flowing from the central station to each district telegraph annunciator, a different letter or series of letters, on the Morse principle, being thus transmitted for each annunciator. Any imperfect action of the apparatus is thus known immediately by the cessation of the continuous current. As soon as the alarm is received at the central office, a message is forthwith sent to the nearest fire-stations, from which the engines, &c., are forthwith despatched. Every few minutes saved in bringing engines upon the scene of a fire largely increases the chance of its being rapidly extinguished, the chance of a fire becoming serious increasing with the square of the time elapsing between the outbreak and the arrival of the brigade. It is noteworthy that cities and towns exist which are, from the peculiar circumstances attending their constructions, practically fireproof; thus Buenos Ayres and Montevideo in South America mainly consist of one-story houses, on account of the prevalence of earthquakes. Owing to the high price of timber and iron joists and girders, these materials are very sparingly used in house-construction; the beams and wood actually employed when absolutely indispensable are of peculiar kinds of hard wood, such as cedar, extremely difficult to ignite; window and door boxes, lathing, wainscoting, and skirting are conspicuous by their absence, the windows consisting simply of sashes in a frame. Stone, which is rapidly disintegrated by heat, is also very sparingly employed, bricks and cement being the chief mate-

rials used in construction; the roofs are nearly flat, having a slope of one in 30 or 35, and composed of thin bricks 13½ inches long. The floors are not boarded, but are all of brick. If a cartload of shavings and pine-wood were placed under a bed in Buenos Ayres, and the furniture piled on the top and the whole fired, four or five of the hard-wood joists of the roof would be burnt through, and the bricks and tiles would fall through: but there the damage would end; the fire could not spread laterally, owing to the want of combustible matter, and the large mass of brick and cement which would naturally check the spread of the flames. In all these respects these South American cities are about diametrically opposed to the European system of building, which is, in many respects, about as well calculated to facilitate the spread of flames as though that were the precise object aimed at.

PIONEER RAILWAYS.

A proposition for the establishment of a cheap and novel variety of railway has been brought forward by Mr. J. L. Haddan, the essential features of which are the construction of a kind of railing or fence supported on stakes or piles driven into the ground, the top rail of which is surmounted by a light iron railway bar. The light engines and carriages running on this *single-rail* line straddle over it, as it were, so that the carriages stand to the railway in much the same relation as the panniers on a mule's back to the animal's spine; the construction is, indeed, intended to rival a caravan of camels or mules conveying merchandise, &c., over a desert or semi-civilised country. In countries infested with white ants, such as Africa and China, the railing or railway

would be wholly constructed of iron; in Canada, where wood is cheap, of wood, with the exception of the top iron rail, which need not weigh more than twelve pounds per yard. The expense of construction of such a line would be but trifling compared with the cost of permanent works, embankments, bridges, &c., required by ordinary railway lines, even when only single; the gradients may be severe, but not necessarily, as the line may be, and indeed should be where practicable, constructed along the mule-tracks, which centuries of experience have indicated as the best route for foot and animal passengers. No bridges over streams would be required, and no liability would be incurred of piers, embankments, and arches being washed away by floods. The character of the line adapts it to districts and climates where ordinary railways would be wholly impracticable; thus it has been suggested that a 'pioneer railway' might be readily constructed over the Palæocrystic sea, so that the next Arctic Expedition might find its way direct to the Pole by rail. Over the Transvaal of South Africa, or through the Euphrates Valley, or in the back districts of China and Tartary, or in Central Africa, the 'pioneer railway' could equally well be used; any number of side-branches on the same system could easily be adapted where necessary; separate lines for passengers and goods traffic can be readily and cheaply constructed on those parts of the main line where the traffic is sufficiently great to render this desirable. No stations would be requisite, the trains being able to stop anywhere with equal facility. The moderate speed (10 to 20 miles an hour) at which the trains would run, with the light weight and efficient brake-power, would in all countries fa-

voured with a clear atmosphere entirely dispense with the necessity for signalmen; so that not only the expenses of construction, but those of working the line, would be but small as compared with the ordinary railway system.

NEW COATING FOR SHIPS' BOTTOMS.

According to experiments recently made by Captain F. Warren neither marine vegetation nor shellfish will adhere to paper immersed in sea-water; and consequently, by coating over the bottoms of ships with a cement which will at once adhere to the iron or wood and to sheets of paper or *papier maché*, and then affixing the latter material, a kind of sheathing is given which is almost completely proof against the usual fouling agents. This invention has been recently tested in the Portsmouth dockyard. An iron plate was coated with ordinary brown paper in this way, and immersed in the harbour for six months; on examination the unprotected surface was covered with rust and shellfish, whilst the coated side was quite free from oxidation, save at the edges of the coating; neither grass nor barnacles adhered to the paper. A particular kind of cement has been also introduced by Captain Warren for the purpose of affixing the paper to the iron; this cement melts at a higher temperature than pitch, and consequently may be usefully employed instead of pitch for the seams of the decks and top-sides of vessels in tropical climates.

THE VANGUARD.

The Admiralty have accepted a tender for raising the Vanguard, with the option of either taking delivery of the vessel when saved and brought into dry dock on payment of 175,000*l.* to the contractor, or of receiving from the contractor

20,000*l.*, and handing over to him the ship and all its contents. In order to raise the vessel appliances are requisite far superior in power to anything hitherto employed: the weight of the hull, partly filled with sand, &c., as it must be from the washing in at the enormous hole made by the ram of the Iron Duke, is probably about 20,000 tons, the weight whilst under water being some 5000 tons. It is proposed to employ four enormous pontoons, each 175 feet long, 50 feet broad, and 15 deep, and divided into 45 compartments fitted with patent sluices and valves. These pontoons being sunk into position alongside of the wreck, the sand must be dredged away, and a large number of steel-wire ropes, each capable of supporting nearly 300 tons, must be passed under the ship about five feet apart, and fastened to the pontoons. In order to effect these operations, however, special diving-dresses are required to enable the wearers to work under water at a depth of 20 fathoms for more than an hour consecutively; the great pressure at this depth prevents the ordinary diving-dress from being used for more than half an hour at a time. When all is ready the water in the pontoons will be displaced by air, and then the pontoons will be caused to rise, bringing the hull of the Vanguard with them.

NEW BOOKS.

We have two interesting works of travel to which we will first direct the attention of our readers. Mr. De Cosson really made a brilliant and rapid dash into Abyssinia, and has written a book* which is replete with adventurous effort and important information. The

* *The Cradle of the Blue Nile: a Visit to the Court of King John of Ethiopia.* By E. A. De Cosson, F.R.G.S. Two vols. (John Murray.)

English, as a nation, have hardly done as much as they could for Abyssinia. We spent blood and treasure freely, and achieved a glorious success. But we forgot that peace has her victories no less than war. We had an opportunity such as may never occur again for promoting Christianity and civilisation in the east of Africa. We had roads and railways and infinite prestige; all the rough ground was broken up,—all healing and beneficial influences. But, unlike the Romans of old, our work passed away with ourselves, and we have left no enduring monuments of our occupation of the country. We have almost forgotten to inquire how Abyssinia, king and people, have fared since we overthrew King Theodore, and took friendly charge of King Theodore's son. We still believe, however, that this is a matter on which the country would wish to be kept well informed. Among the many chiefs who shared dominion in the vast warlike kingdom of Ethiopia after the fall of Theodore, Prince Kassa of Tigre emerged conspicuous, and at last came to his throne, and became Yohannes of Ethiopia. We believe the secret of his success was that he made a judicious investment in English muskets. In 1873 Mr. De Cosson made his way to his court through Abyssinia and Upper Nubia. The journey was undertaken simply for his amusement, but it was probably of some political service to this country. He really seems to have done a great deal towards modifying the slave-trade in Abyssinia. He sides entirely against Egypt in the matter of her encroachments on the Abyssinian frontier, and believes that she is the real abettor of the African slave-trade. Mr. De Cosson faithfully and lucidly records in a diary-form all the particulars of his journey, which

abounded with great perils, great fatigues, and great successes.

The historical notes are interesting. Mr. De Cosson confirms the general accuracy of Bruce's narrative, except that he cannot say that he ever saw any steaks cut out of the living cow. But we must go back to the earliest dates. The royal family declare that they are the descendants of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. They were converted to Christianity—and a very debased form of Christianity it is—so early as the fourth century. Dean Stanley in his *Eastern Church* has some interesting notes on the Church of Abyssinia. The Portuguese came here believing that in the Emperor of Abyssinia they recognised the legendary Prester John, a veritable Pope, a King of kings endowed with eternal youth. The aspirations of the Portuguese in their Oriental voyages are set forth in the *Lusiad* of Camoens, that solitary epic poem of Portugal. We are glad, by the way, to recognise a new edition of Michell's famous translation of Camoens, edited with preface and notes by Mr. Hodges.* The fortress-cathedral and the palace of Gondar are monuments of what the Portuguese achieved. There is solidity and completeness about all they did. The castle of Gondar is a picturesque and noble mass of buildings, and in the rear are the stables where the old Abyssinian kings used to keep their lions.

The remarks of such a keen, albeit youthful, observer as Mr. De Cosson are always amusing and accurate. He was fortunate in meeting a German naturalist who had resided thirty-seven years in the country, studying the botany and geology, and had taken unto himself an 'Eastern bride.' This sage, Count Schimper, thought that a single mountain in Abyssinia

* George Bell & Sons.

might well occupy a man for a lifetime. Mr. De Cosson was very much struck with the young ladies of the country. 'Abyssinian girls come running down to fill their water-jars at the river, and steal a look at the camp of the white strangers. They were lithesome graceful creatures, of a clear dark-brown colour, and looked very picturesque in their short kirtles and spotted leopards' skins, and their black hair gathered up into a classical knot at the back of the head.' With this agrees the language of Dr. Livingstone: 'Many have finely-shaped heads, straight or aquiline thin noses and thin lips, magnificent forms, with small feet and hands and graceful limbs.' This is certainly not the nigger physiognomy. Many persons have been greatly exercised in mind whether St. Augustin of Hippo was a negro. It would of course be desirable to ascertain every detail about the great African bishop. There was one German scholar who once wrote a treatise on the quantity of the penultimate in the name of Monica, St. Augustin's mother. He must have been like the scholar whom we think Mr. Gladstone applauds, who regretted that he had not early in life concentrated all his energies on the dative case. Ethnology and physiognomy would suggest that the great bishop, if of African and not Latin descent, would belong to the Abyssinian and not the negro type. We hear a story of monkeys devouring oysters. 'The monkeys who live in the woods come down in troops to collect oysters; but he could never get sight of a monkey eating one. At last, however, he discovered an open place in a secluded part of the forest, where the whole ground was thickly strewn with shells, and by watching it he found that the monkeys were in the

habit of congregating there to eat their oysters in company, flinging the empty shells at the heads of one another.' The Abyssinians are rather cheerful in their habits. Every visitor is expected to take a couple of bottles of tedge; but then, like Europeans, they have the privilege of having a servant standing behind them, to whom, unlike Europeans, they may pass on the bottle. 'Good tedge is rather heady; we always took care to keep a native servant with a steady head standing behind us for the special service of emptying our bottles, a duty which it seemed to give him the greatest satisfaction to perform.'

At the commencement of the second volume Mr. De Cosson is fairly at the court of the African king. Court and courtiers are excellently described. Our Queen's letter to the King had been placed in all the principal churches of the land. Abyssinia has been called the mother of Egypt because the Nile is fed by its thousand streams. The natives have an absurd idea of turning the course of the river in order to avenge themselves on the Khedive. The author went out to the great lake Tzana, and had fine sport with the 'hippos.' It is curious how the ways and methods of civilisation have extended into the heart of Africa. The traveller had been obliged to leave behind him a box of the Maria Teresa dollars, which form the most prized currency of the country. 'Fortunately the king was desirous of transmitting money to his newly appointed consul in London [Mr. H. S. King, the publisher], and on our giving him cheques for 200*l.* ordered his treasurer to count us out a thousand silver dollars, which were borne to our hut in great state. As may be supposed, the king had never seen a cheque before, and when we ex-

plained to him that it was an order for his consul to receive a thousand dollars in gold from our treasure-keepers, he asked where the seal was; for in Ethiopia all documents are sealed instead of signed, as is the usual custom throughout the East. K., with ready wit, pointed out the embossed pennystamp on the cheque, and the king was satisfied.' When Mr. De Cosson had returned beyond the Abyssinian frontier he came to Galabat, and visited its slave-market. This is an awful chapter, but it ought to be read by all those who would know what the slave-trade is, and have some hazy idea that it is pretty well on its way to be abolished. The ride across the desert and the sail down the Blue Nile fill up the second part of the second volume. It is here that the only sign of weakness appears, in a bit of padding, 'The Story of Leila.' The work, as a whole, is a genuine and lively book of travels, and can be heartily recommended to all readers.

Another work of travel and adventure, interesting enough in its way, is Mr. Sterndale's book *Seonee*.* The book is full of adventure, tiger-adventure most of all. Mr. Sterndale has thrown his work, however, into somewhat unusual form. He has developed it in the shape of a story, so far as that can be a story which has little dialogue and no plot. The story form is very attractive to young children; but bigger children like a body of safe facts, from which they may draw their own conclusions. The suspicion is created that the narrative form might be adopted to conceal a poverty of matter. We are bound to say, however, that Mr. Sterndale writes out of a fulness of knowledge, and

there is a meritorious absence of padding. It is also to be observed that the events described happened some fifteen or twenty years ago, and Seonee has confessedly changed its character and appearance very much in that interval of time. Having noted these circumstances, we may without concern give ourselves up to the enjoyment of a very fascinating book.

As we have said, the work is full of adventure, and Mr. Sterndale is careful to impress upon his readers—which may include many who may desire to follow large game in India—that the failures and disappointments are very many; and a book such as he writes of course relates to the prizes, and not to the blanks. We suppose, for instance, that all the successful tiger-hunts are recorded. The most ferocious man-eater of all did not fall to English guns, but to an accidental shot of a poor sycee. He complains that sportsmen exaggerate by reckoning the length of the animal from the tip of the tail, whereas there may be a much heavier animal with a much shorter tail. The caudal appendage has not much to do with it. The Seonee country is, or used to be, a regular nursing-ground for tigers. At the present day the tale of human lives lost through tigers is immense—many thousands annually—and even Mr. Freeman could have no objections to the field-sports which rid the country of such ferocious brutes. The panthers seem every bit as bad as the tigers. Night-shooting has the objection that, unless the bullet kills at once, the victim may wander away and die after days of misery. This is often the case in the day-time amid the rocky hills of India, and much more in the night. Fordham, the principal character in the book, advises that the wild animal should be brought to bay; 'it is better that the poor

* *Seonee, or Camp Life on the Sattara Range. A Tale of Indian Adventure.* By R. A. Sterndale, F.R.G.S. (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.)

creature should die thus than to creep away to linger with an ill-aimed bullet in its body.' Mr. Sterndale has a good deal to say about elephants, whom he describes as very delicate animals, and peculiarly liable to colds and inflammations, and are for ever being physicked by their keepers. Though a very timid animal, he gathers boldness from his rider, and will face the fiercest tiger. It is interesting to know that Mr. Sterndale is somewhat of a believer in the serpent, and in reference to that fabulous animal discusses the sea-snakes of the Indian Ocean. The author mentions the saying of a man newly arrived in India. 'Well, Spelter,' some one asked him, 'how do you like India?' 'My dear boy,' replied Spelter, taking a pull at a long tumbler full of iced brandy-and-soda, 'it is the finest country in the world for a powerful thirst.' We can well believe the author's statement that on the arid plain a man would willingly give a five-pound note for a bottle of cool soda-water. 'How is it on such occasions one always thinks of cool champagne-cup or Gunter's ices, or other things which are quite out of reach? It is the tantalising vision that tortures the poor wretch who sinks to die on the sands of the desert—the mirage of cool refreshing streams and palm-trees reflected in the bosom of placid lakes.' The volume has an appendix and notes, the former consisting of a topographical and historical sketch of the Seonee district. The volume concludes with a spirited account of the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny, a well-told chapter of veritable history. The character of Fordham comes very well out in the description. He is the kind of officer which Colonel Newcome must have been, and we would fain believe a true type of a very large proportion of Indian officers.

Most of us take a great interest in Eton. With all its faults, it is the first of English schools. There are few indeed who have not some associations with it. We have had long essays and letters about Eton—Jacob Omnium to wit—newspaper discussions, parliamentary discussions, evidence and argument to any extent. But there is one kind of information which has never been exactly supplied until the present time—the information which an observant and intelligent Eton boy could give us. There is now before the public a little book* giving an account of a day's doings at Eton. It is a typical day, and something more. Every day cannot be exactly like this. It combines the salient points of various days into a single day. It is a very amusing book. Masters are often critical upon the boys, but here the tables are turned, and the boy is critical upon the masters. We have a very clear and pleasant account of Eton, which will enable anxious parents to realise their boys' lives very fully. The young gentleman, who, we believe, is hardly seventeen, shows a remarkable amount of literary ability.

In subsequent editions the young gentleman assures sceptical readers that he is still an Eton boy, and likely to remain so for another year. We hardly know whether we should congratulate or condole with the master of the form on so precocious a pupil. We hope the young gentleman will apply himself sedulously to the proper studies of the place, and not allow a lucky literary hit to interfere with his serious education. The tone of the book is throughout that of pleasant chaff. To enable readers to appreciate Eton terms he has added an

* *A Day of my Life; or Every-day Experiences at Eton.* By an Eton Boy. (Sampson Low, Marston, & Co.)

explanatory glossary, which he says has given him more trouble than all the rest of the work put together. We wish there had been a little more notice of the more serious pursuits of the place. The Eton Debating Club has always held a high place, and has been a great feeder of the University Union; and we should like to know something of the æsthetic tastes of the young gentlemen. We never meet cleverer boys, or duller and worse educated, than at Eton. We suspect that the dull are somewhat neglected, and that the clever boys—and we consider our author a very clever boy—get ample attention. But the true theory of a school is to turn out all boys as well as possible.

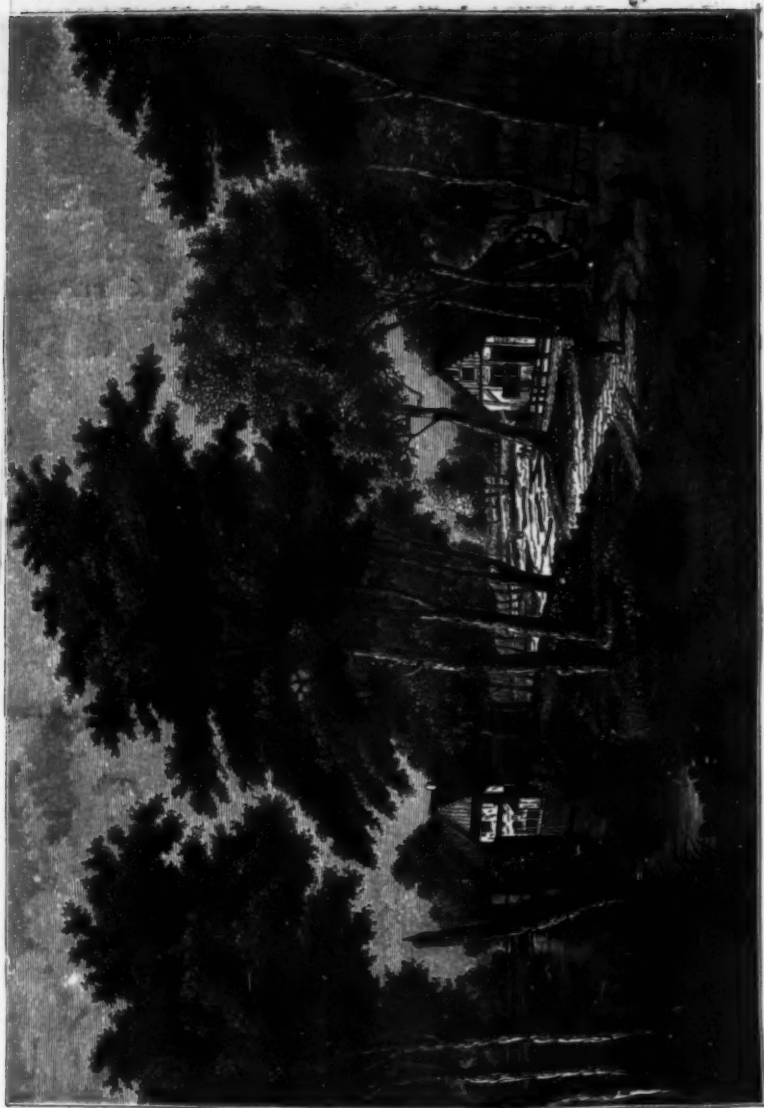
We must now recur to that more direct element of fiction, which even writers on grave subjects find it hard to eliminate from their pages. And first let us give a hearty welcome to *Tatiana*, a true wifely heroine, who soon conciliates the regard of all readers. In several ways the work is very interesting. Considering the interest there is at the present time in all Russian subjects, it is remarkable how profoundly ignorant we all are of Russian literature. The French, and even the Americans, are far ahead of us in this respect. All that the English public have are translations of a few novels; the number might be counted on the fingers of one hand without going to the other. Russian fiction may be divided into the Romantic and the Realistic schools. The former sentimental school was chiefly imitative, the imitations being mainly of Rousseau and our own Richardson. The Russians imported their literature almost bodily from Western Europe; they have translations in thousands of modern books. The compliment is only rarely repaid by a version in English, French, or German.

What Russian modern fiction mainly exhibits, in which it has an historical value, is the conflict between the new civilisation and the old forms of barbarism. This is clearly and fully brought out in this novel of *Tatiana, or the Conspiracy*.^{*} The conspiracy mentioned is no conspiracy at all; it is a device of a head of police to promote business and avenge himself on his personal enemies. The Emperor Nicholas himself, for a few pages, is one of the characters of the book, and is depicted not untruly, not unkindly; but the net result is to inspire a horror of absolutism, and the instruments which absolutism employs. We should wish, however, that some of the darker features of bureaucracy were overdrawn. The Siberian part of the work is done with remarkable power. It brings before us the cruel relentless iron rule of the Muscovite. It touches that old chord, to which all readers of *Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia*, will respond. As a transcript of Russian life, readers of fiction will find that they are entering on almost entirely a new province in this novel of stirring incident and picturesque description.

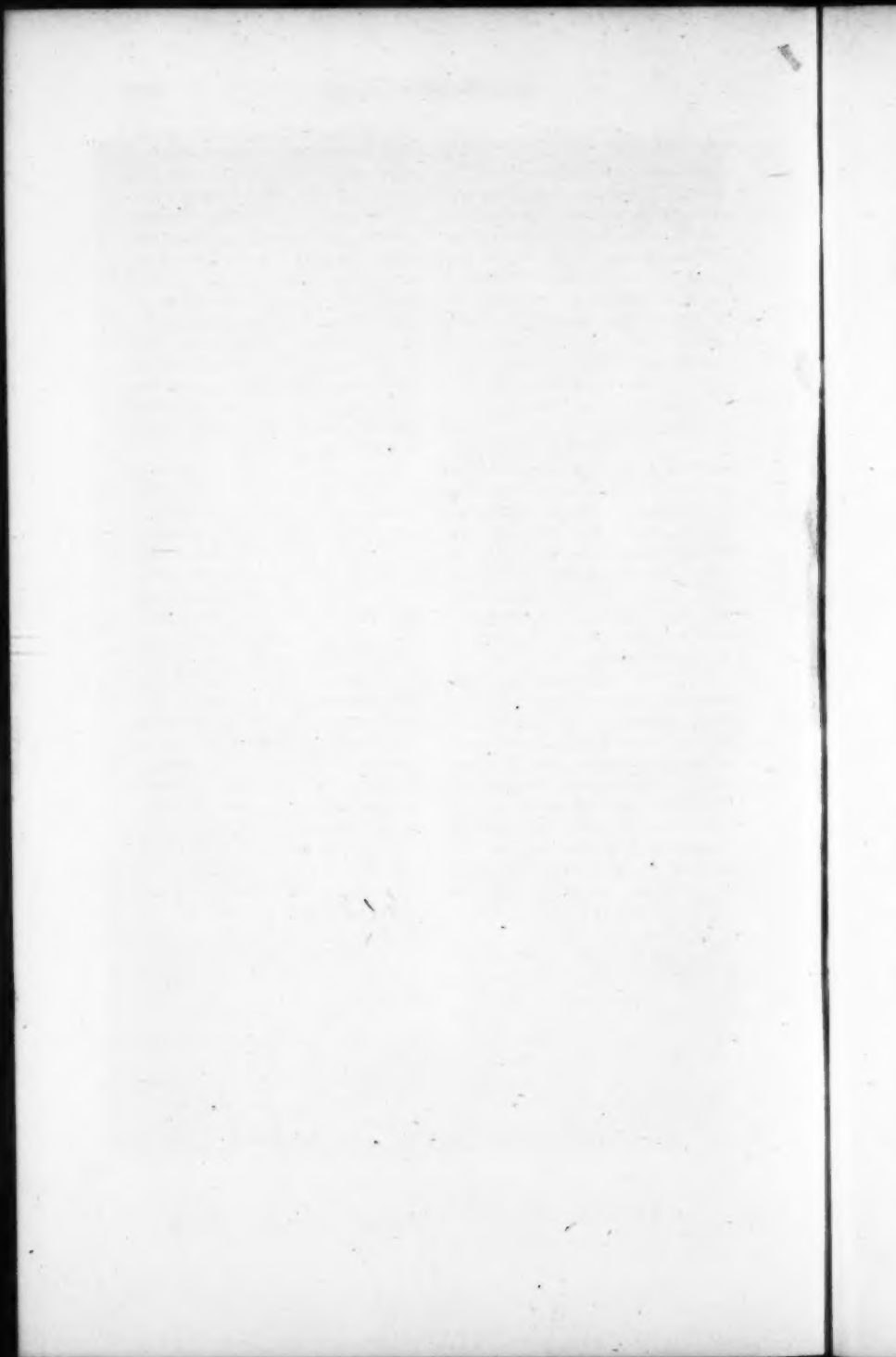
King or Knave† is a well-written story, with the action rather too crowded, and hardly concluding with the measure of poetical justice which best suits the British novel-reader. To the question implied by the title, 'Is the hero king or knave?' our answer would be, 'Neither the one or the other, but a tincture of both.' As in the case of all, or nearly all, there is a mixture of motives and influences. Godfrey Duncombe is weak, vain, and foolish, but he has a certain

^{*} *Tatiana, or the Conspiracy*. By Prince Joseph Lubomirski. Translated from the French by Theodore E. Worledge. (Samuel Tinsley.)

† *King or Knave*? By the Author of 'Hilda and I.' (Chapman & Hall.)



A LANDSCAPE BY HOBREMA.
See THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.



generosity of character not unusual in such natures, and which goes some way towards redeeming them. There is the usual story of fashionable iniquities, which appear racy in the acting and the telling, but which are in effect trite and monotonous; racing, betting, card-playing, resulting generally in going to the bad and an early death. It is difficult to feel much sympathy with any of the characters except unbeatified Beatrice, who refuses a man she loves because she thinks he does not love her enough. Moreover the ethical interest is not wrought out sufficiently. In the case of a young fellow like Sir Godfrey, he either hardens into a knave, or develops if not exactly into a king, at least into something better than the former self. The story is fresh and brisk, sustains its interest, and at times shows some happiness of phrase and feeling.

We have left ourselves little space to speak of a work on Peru of remarkable fulness and value.* Mr. Squier was lately a Commissioner of the United States to Peru, and he spent nearly two years in thoroughly traversing the country. The work will be found extremely interesting, especially to Peruvian bondholders, who have an interest in the development of the resources of the country. There are resources, and they will probably be developed, but hardly in our time, or our children's children's time. Guano and gold have always gone together, but the gold has proved a source of great corruption to the nation. The new industry of nitrate of soda, of which the supply is boundless and the uses increasing, will prove hardly less valuable than guano. The cinchona or

bark-tree, growing on lofty mountain wildernesses, is perhaps the most precious of the productions of the country. Mr. Squier's own tastes have been mainly archaeological. He has worked diligently 'with compass, measuring-line, and photographic camera,' and the result is a remarkable wealth of illustration. But he has his stories of travelling adventures and sketches of scenery and social life. The book is thoroughly exhaustive of its subjects, and will require and will repay any careful study that may be given to it.

THE WAGNER FESTIVAL.

The visit of Herr Richard Wagner, after an interval of twenty-two years, has been indubitably the musical event of the month. The series of six concerts was planned to present the English public with some idea of the range of the composer's music, more especially to make them acquainted with his last great work, the *King of the Nibelungs*, which it is not likely can or will be ever given in its dramatic entirety in this country. There were also rumours that Herr Wagner desired to 'pick the plethoric pockets' of the English to cover deficits left by his Bayreuth Festival. Be that as it may, notwithstanding difficulties in the assemblage of a large orchestra at this season of the year, the concerts have taken place. As to their financial and musical success, the world is divided. The composer, however, met with a warm welcome on his first appearance, and the music of *Rienzi* and the *Tannhäuser* was listened to with pleasure. The same cannot be said of the *Rhinegold*, which the audience found decidedly tedious without its scenic accompaniments, a fact they evinced by leaving the Hall in large numbers. The same thing was repeated the next concert, when they

* Peru: *Incidents of Travel and Exploration in the Land of the Incas*. By E. George Squier, M.A., F.S.A. (Macmillan.)

left, in spite of the incomparable singing of Frau Materna in the *Walkure*, the real fact being that the *Flying Dutchman* had been sufficient for ordinary attention in one evening. The great mistake of the concerts has been their length. They have, however, gone on increasing in popularity, and royal patronage was not wanting at the third and fourth to set a good example in patience and appreciation. Mr. Hill and Frau Materna's splendid singing are matters not to be forgotten, though those who had the good fortune to hear the accomplished singer in Bayreuth last year, miss her splendid impersonation of Brunhilda. Hoarseness of various singers interfered with the execution of the fourth programme. The fifth concert also suffered severely from this, Messrs. Unger and Hill being quite *hors de combat*, and the programme thereby needing considerable alteration. But the audience was larger and more sympathetic. The funeral march from *Goetterdämmerung*, with its splendid orchestration and reminiscence motives of the entire *Ring*, told well, and was loudly encored. At the sixth concert the glorious 'March of the Master-Singers' brought the Wagner music home to a large and fashionable British audience.

THE PAINTER OF 'SMILING NATURE.'

The beautiful landscape after Meindert Hobbema, which we give this month, is a fine example, rendered with admirable effect on the wood, of a great master, whose present reputation is a curious instance of the tardy recognition of genius. Hobbema is supposed to have studied under Ruysdael, but, unlike his weird, dreamy, mysterious master, he dwelt on the serene and sunny aspects of Nature. For a long time Hobbema was eclipsed by the splendour of his master's fame, leading the dealers of those days to substitute the monogram or name of Ruysdael for that of the real painter. Now his works obtain prices higher than those of Ruysdael.

England is particularly rich in fine pictures by this landscape painter. Two superb views of a wooded country are at Grosvenor House, whilst our National Gallery has six pictures. Of these, two—a 'Water-Mill' 'of singular clearness,' and a 'Landscape' 'of the most luminous chiaroscuro'—were the gift of the late Mr. Wynn Ellis. They will well repay a careful study; they are pictures of commanding beauty by another true artist who was neglected in life, and who died in poverty.

MICHAEL STROGOFF, OR THE RUSSIAN COURIER.

BY JULES VERNE.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NIGHT OF THE FIFTH OF OCTOBER.

IVAN OGAREFF's plan had been contrived with the greatest care, and except for some unforeseen accident he believed that it must succeed. It was of importance that the Bolchaïa gate should be free when he gave it up. The attention of the besieged was therefore to be drawn to another part of the town. A diversion was agreed upon with the Emir.

This diversion was to be effected, on the suburban side of Irkutsk, up and down the river, on its right bank. The attack on these two points was to be conducted in earnest, and at the same time a feigned attempt at crossing the Augara on the left bank was to be made. The Bolchaïa gate would be probably deserted, so much the more because on this side the Tartar outposts, having drawn back, would appear to have broken up.

It was the 5th of October. In four-and-twenty hours the capital of Eastern Siberia would be in the hands of the Emir, and the Grand Duke in the power of Ivan Ogareff.

During the day an unusual stir was going on in the Augara camp. From the windows of the palace and the houses on the right bank important preparations on the opposite shore could be distinctly seen. Numerous Tartar detachments were converging towards the camp, and from hour to hour reinforced the Emir's troops. These

movements, intended to deceive the besieged, were conducted in the most open manner possible before their eyes.

Ogareff had not concealed from the Grand Duke that an attack on this side was to be feared. He knew, he said, that an assault was to be made, both above and below the town, and he counselled the duke to reinforce the two more directly threatened points.

These preparations were carried out in order to support the advice given by Ogareff, which he was most urgent should be taken into consideration. Accordingly, after a council of war had been held in the palace, orders were given to concentrate the defence on the right bank of the Augara and at the two ends of the town, where the earthworks protected the river.

This was exactly what Ogareff wished. He did not expect that the Bolchaïa gate would be left entirely without defenders, but that there would only be a small number. Besides, Ogareff meant to give such importance to the diversion, that the Grand Duke would be obliged to oppose it with all his available forces.

In fact an occurrence of exceptional gravity, designed by Ogareff, was to afford its powerful aid to the accomplishment of his design. Even had Irkutsk not been attacked but on the distant point of the Bolchaïa gate and the right bank of the river, this occurrence would be sufficient to attract the whole mass of defenders exactly

to the spot to which Ogareff wished to draw them. His purpose was at the same time to produce so frightful a catastrophe that terror must inevitably overwhelm the hearts of the besieged.

There was every chance that the gate, left free at the time appointed, would be clear for the entrance of the thousands of Tartars now concealed under cover of the thick forest to the east.

All day the garrison and population of Irkutsk were on the alert. The measures to repel an attack on the points hitherto unassailed had been taken. The Grand Duke and General Voranzoff visited the posts, strengthened by their orders. Warsili Fedor's corps occupied the north of the town, but with orders to throw themselves where the danger was greatest. The right bank of the Augara had been protected with the few guns possessed by the defenders. With these measures, taken in time, thanks to the advice so opportunely given by Ivan Ogareff, there was good reason to hope that the expected attack would be repulsed. In that case the Tartars, momentarily discouraged, would no doubt not make another attempt against the town for several days. Now the troops expected by the Grand Duke might arrive at any hour. The safety or the loss of Irkutsk hung only by a thread.

On this day the sun, which had risen at twenty minutes to six, set at forty minutes past five, having traced its diurnal arc for eleven hours above the horizon. The twilight would struggle with the night for another two hours. Then it would be intensely dark, for the sky was cloudy, and there would be no moon.

This gloom would favour the plans of Ivan Ogareff.

For a few days already a sharp

frost had given warning of the approaching rigour of the Siberian winter, and this evening it was especially severe. The soldiers posted on the right bank of the Augara, obliged to conceal their position, had lighted no fires. They suffered cruelly from the low temperature. A few feet below them, the ice in large masses drifted down the current. All day these masses had been seen passing rapidly between the two banks.

This had been considered by the Grand Duke and his officers as a fortunate circumstance.

Should the channel of the Augara continue to be thus obstructed, the passage must be impracticable. The Tartars could use neither rafts nor boats. As to supposing that they could cross the river on the ice, that was not possible. The newly-frozen plain could not bear the weight of an assaulting column.

But this circumstance, as it appeared favourable to the defenders of Irkutsk, Ogareff might have regretted. He did not do so, however!

The traitor knew well that the Tartars would not try to pass the Augara, and that, on its side at least, their attempt was only a feint.

About ten in the evening, however, the state of the river sensibly improved, to the great surprise of the besieged, and still more to their disadvantage. The passage, till then impracticable, became all at once possible. The bed of the Augara was clear. The blocks of ice, which had for some days drifted past in large numbers, disappeared down the current, and five or six only now occupied the space between the banks. They no longer presented even the same structure as those formed under ordinary conditions and by the influence of a regular frost. They were simple pieces, torn off from

some ice-field, smooth, and not rising in rugged lumps.

The Russian officers reported this change in the state of the river to the Grand Duke. They suggested that this change was probably caused by the circumstance that, in some narrower part of the Angara, the blocks had accumulated so as to form a barrier.

We know that such was the case.

The passage of the Angara was thus open to the besiegers. There was greater reason than ever for the Russians to be on their guard.

Up to midnight nothing had occurred. On the eastern side, beyond the Bolchaïa gate, all was quiet. Not a glimmer was seen in the dense forest, which appeared confounded on the horizon with the masses of clouds hanging low down in the sky.

Lights flitting to and fro in the Angara camp showed that a considerable movement was taking place.

From a verst above and below the point where the scarp met the river's bank came a dull murmur, proving that the Tartars were on foot, expecting some signal.

An hour passed. Nothing new.

The bell of the Irkutsk cathedral was about to strike two o'clock in the morning, and not a movement amongst the besiegers had yet shown that they were about to commence the assault.

The Grand Duke and his officers began to suspect that they had been mistaken. Had it really been the Tartars' plan to surprise the town? The preceding nights had not been nearly so quiet. Musketry rattling from the outposts, shells whistling through the air; and this time, nothing.

The Grand Duke, General Voranzoff, and their aides-de-camp waited, ready to give their orders according to circumstances.

We have said that Ogareff occupied a room in the palace. It was a large chamber on the ground floor, its windows opening on a side terrace. By taking a few steps along this terrace a view of the river could be obtained.

Profound darkness reigned in the room. Ogareff stood by a window, awaiting the hour to act. The signal, of course, could come from him alone. This signal once given, when the greater part of the defenders of Irkutsk would be summoned to the points openly attacked, his plan was to leave the palace and hurry to the accomplishment of his work.

He now crouched in the shadow of the recess, like a wild beast ready to spring on its prey.

A few minutes before two o'clock, the Grand Duke desired that Michael Strogoff—which was the only name they could give to Ivan Ogareff—should be brought to him. An aide-de-camp came to the room, the door of which was closed. He called.

Ogareff, motionless near the window, and invisible in the shade, took good care not to answer.

The Grand Duke was therefore informed that the Czar's courier was not at that moment in the palace.

Two o'clock struck. Now was the time to cause the diversion agreed upon with the Tartars waiting for the assault.

Ivan Ogareff opened the window, and stationed himself at the north angle of the side terrace.

Below him flowed the waters of the Angara, roaring as they dashed round the broken piles. Ogareff took a match from his pocket, struck it, and lighted a small bunch of tow impregnated with priming-powder, which he threw into the river.

It was by the orders of Ivan

Ogareff that the torrents of mineral oil had been thrown on the surface of the Augara.

There are numerous naphtha springs below Irkutsk, on the right bank, between the suburb of Poshkavak and the town. Ogareff had resolved to employ this terrible means to carry fire into Irkutsk. He therefore took possession of the immense reservoirs which contained the combustible liquid. It was only necessary to demolish a piece of wall in order to allow it to flow out in a vast stream.

This had been done that night, a few hours previously, and this was the reason that the raft which carried the true courier of the Czar, Nadia, and the fugitives floated on a current of mineral oil. Through the breaches in these reservoirs of enormous dimensions rushed the naphtha in torrents, and following the inclination of the ground, it spread over the surface of the river, where its density allowed it to float.

This was the way Ivan Ogareff carried on warfare. Allied with Tartars, he acted like a Tartar, and against his own countrymen.

The tow had been thrown on the waters of the Augara. In an instant, with electrical rapidity, as if the current had been of alcohol, the whole river was in a blaze above and below the town. Columns of blue flames ran between the two banks. Volumes of vapour curled up above. The few pieces of ice which still drifted were seized by the burning liquid and melted like wax on the top of a furnace, the evaporated water escaping to the air in shrill hisses.

At the same moment firing broke out on the north and south of the town. The enemy's batteries discharged their guns at random. Several thousand Tar-

tars rushed to the assault of the earthworks. The houses on the bank, built of wood, took fire in every direction. A bright light dissipated the darkness of the night.

'At last!' said Ivan Ogareff.

And he had good reason for congratulating himself. The diversion which he had planned was terrible. The defenders of Irkutsk found themselves between the attack of the Tartars and the fearful effects of fire. The bells rang, and all the able-bodied of the population ran, some towards the points attacked, and others towards the houses in the grasp of the flames, which it seemed too probable would ere long envelop the whole town.

The gate of Bolchaia was nearly free. Only a very small guard had been left there. And by the traitor's suggestion, and in order that the event might be explained apart from him and from political hate, this small guard had been chosen from the little band of exiles.

Ogareff reëntered his room, now brilliantly lighted by the flames from the Augara; then he made ready to go out.

But scarcely had he opened the door when a woman rushed into the room, her clothes drenched, her hair in disorder.

'Sangarre!' exclaimed Ogareff, in the first moment of surprise, and not supposing that it could be any other woman than the gipsy.

It was not Sangarre; it was Nadia.

At the moment when, floating on the ice, the girl had uttered a cry on seeing the fire spreading along the current, Michael Strogoff had seized her in his arms, and plunged with her into the river itself to seek a refuge in its depths from the flames. The block

which bore them was then not more than thirty fathoms from the first quay below Irkutsk.

Swimming beneath the water, Michael managed to get a footing with Nadia on the quay.

Michael Strogoff had reached his journey's end! He was in Irkutsk!

'To the governor's palace!' said he to Nadia.

In less than ten minutes they arrived at the entrance to the palace. Long tongues of flame from the Augara licked its walls, but were powerless to set it on fire.

Beyond, the houses on the bank were in a blaze.

The palace being open to all, Michael and Nadia entered without difficulty. In the general confusion no one remarked them, although their garments were dripping.

A crowd of officers coming for orders, and of soldiers running to execute them, filled the great hall on the ground floor. There, in a sudden eddy of the confused multitude, Michael and the young girl were separated from each other.

Nadia ran distracted through the passages, calling her companion, and asking to be taken to the Grand Duke.

A door into a room flooded with light opened before her. She entered, and found herself suddenly face to face with the man whom she had met at Ichim, whom she had seen at Tomsk; face to face with the one whose villainous hand would an instant later betray the town.

'Ivan Ogareff!' she cried.

On hearing his name pronounced, the wretch started. His real name known, all his plans would be balked. There was but one thing to be done—to kill the person who had just uttered it.

Ogareff darted at Nadia; but

the girl, a knife in her hand, retreated against the wall, determined to defend herself.

'Ivan Ogareff!' again cried Nadia, knowing well that so detested a name would soon bring her help.

'Ah! Be silent!' hissed out the traitor between his clenched teeth.

'Ivan Ogareff!' exclaimed a third time the brave young girl, in a voice to which hate had added tenfold strength.

Mad with fury, Ogareff, drawing a dagger from his belt, again rushed at Nadia, and compelled her to retreat into a corner of the room.

Her last hope appeared gone, when the villain, suddenly lifted by an irresistible force, was dashed to the ground.

'Michael!' cried Nadia.

It was Michael Strogoff.

Michael had heard Nadia's call. Guided by her voice he had just in time reached Ivan Ogareff's room, and entered by the open door.

'Fear nothing, Nadia,' said he, placing himself between her and Ogareff.

'Ah!' cried the girl, 'take care, brother! The traitor is armed! He can see!'

Ogareff rose, and thinking he had an immeasurable advantage over the blind man, threw himself on him.

But with one hand the blind man grasped the arm of his enemy, seized his weapon, and hurled him again to the ground.

Pale with rage and shame, Ogareff remembered that he wore a sword. He drew it from its scabbard, and returned a second time to the charge.

Michael Strogoff also knew him.

A blind man! Ogareff had only to deal with a blind man! He was more than a match for him.

Nadia, terrified at the danger which threatened her companion in so unequal a struggle, ran to the door calling for help.

'Close the door, Nadia,' said Michael. 'Call no one, and leave me alone. The Czar's courier has nothing to fear to-day from this villain! Let him come on, if he dares! I am ready for him.'

In the mean time Ogareff, gathering himself together like a tiger about to spring, uttered not a word. The noise of his footsteps, his very breathing, he endeavoured to conceal from the ear of the blind man. His object was to strike before his opponent was aware of his approach, to strike him with a deadly blow. The traitor did not think of fighting, but assassinating the man whose name he had stolen.

Nadia, terrified and at the same time confident, watched this terrible scene with involuntary admiration. Michael's calm bearing seemed to have inspired her. Michael's sole weapon was his Siberian knife; he did not see his adversary armed with a sword, it is true. But Heaven's support seemed to be afforded him. How, without almost stirring, did he always face the point of the sword?

Ivan Ogareff watched his strange adversary with visible anxiety. His superhuman calm had an effect upon him. In vain, appealing to his reason, did he tell himself that in so unequal a combat all the advantages were on his side. The immobility of the blind man froze him. He had settled on the place where he would strike his victim—he had fixed upon it. What, then, hindered him from putting an end to his blind antagonist?

At last, with a spring he drove his sword full at Michael's breast.

An imperceptible movement

of the blind man's knife turned aside the blow. Michael had not been touched, and coolly he awaited a second attack.

Cold drops stood on Ogareff's brow. He drew back a step, then again leaped forward. But as the first, this second attempt failed. The knife had simply parried the blow from the traitor's useless sword.

Mad with rage and terror before this living statue, he gazed into the wide open eyes of the blind man. Those eyes, which seemed to pierce to the bottom of his soul, and yet which did not, could not see, exercised a sort of dreadful fascination over him.

All at once, Ogareff uttered a cry. A sudden light flashed across his brain.

'He sees!' he exclaimed, 'he sees!'

And like a wild beast trying to retreat into its den, step by step, terrified, he drew back to the end of the room.

Then the statue became animated, the blind man walked straight up to Ivan Ogareff, and placing himself right before him,

'Yes, I see!' said he. 'I see the mark of the knout which I gave you, traitor and coward! I see the place where I am about to strike you! Defend your life! It is a duel I deign to offer you! My knife against your sword!'

'He sees!' said Nadia. 'Gracious Heaven, is it possible!'

Ogareff felt that he was lost. But mustering all his courage, he sprang forward on his impassible adversary. The two blades crossed, but at a touch from Michael's knife, wielded in the hand of the Siberian hunter, the sword flew in splinters, and the wretch, stabbed to the heart, fell lifeless on the ground.

At the same moment the door was thrown open. The Grand

Duke, accompanied by some of his officers, appeared on the threshold.

The Grand Duke advanced. In the body lying on the ground he recognised the man whom he believed to be the Czar's courier.

Then in a threatening voice, 'Who killed that man?' he asked.

'I,' replied Michael.

One of the officers put a pistol to his temple, ready to fire.

'Your name?' asked the Grand Duke, before giving the order for his brains to be blown out.

'Your Highness,' answered Michael, 'ask me rather the name of the man who lies at your feet!'

'That man? I know him. He is a servant of my brother. He is the Czar's courier.'

'That man, your Highness, is not a courier of the Czar! He is Ivan Ogareff!'

'Ivan Ogareff!' exclaimed the Grand Duke.

'Yes; Ivan the traitor!'

'But who are you, then?'

'Michael Strogoff!'

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

MICHAEL STROGOFF was not, had never been blind. A purely human phenomenon, at the same time moral and physical, had neutralised the action of the incandescent blade which Feofar's executioner had passed before his eyes.

It may be remembered that, at the moment of the execution, Marfa Strogoff was present, stretching out her hands towards her son. Michael gazed at her as a son would gaze at his mother when it is for the last time. The tears, which his pride in vain endeavoured to subdue, welling up from his heart, gathered under

his eyelids, and, volatilising on the cornea, had saved his sight. The vapour formed by his tears, interposing between the glowing sabre and his eyeballs, had been sufficient to annihilate the action of the heat. A similar effect is produced when a workman smelter, after dipping his hand in vapour, can with impunity hold it over a stream of melted iron.

Michael had immediately understood the danger in which he would be placed should he make known his secret to any one. He at once saw, on the other hand, that he might make use of his supposed blindness for the accomplishment of his designs. Because it was believed that he was blind, he would be allowed to go free. He must therefore be blind—blind to all, even to Nadia, blind everywhere—and not a gesture at any moment must let the truth be suspected. His resolution was taken. He must risk his life even to afford to all he might meet the proof of his want of sight. We know how perfectly he acted the part he had determined on.

His mother alone knew the truth, and he had whispered it to her in Tomsk itself, when bending over her in the dark he covered her with kisses.

When Ogareff had in his cruel irony held the imperial letter before the eyes which he believed were destroyed, Michael had been able to read, and had read the letter which disclosed the odious plans of the traitor. This was the reason of the wonderful resolution he exhibited during the second part of his journey. This was the reason of his unalterable longing to reach Irkutsk, so as to perform his mission by word of mouth. He knew that the town would be betrayed. He knew that the of the Grand Duke was threatene

The safety of the Czar's brother and of Siberia was in his hands.

This story was told in a few words to the Grand Duke, and Michael repeated also—and with what emotion!—the part Nadia had taken in these events.

'Who is this girl?' asked the Grand Duke.

'The daughter of the exile Warsili Fedor,' replied Michael.

'The daughter of Captain Fedor,' said the Grand Duke, 'has ceased to be the daughter of an exile. There are no longer exiles in Irkutsk.'

Nadia, less strong in joy than she had been in grief, fell on her knees before the Grand Duke, who raised her with one hand, while he extended the other to Michael.

An hour after Nadia was in her father's arms.

Michael Strogoff, Nadia, and Warsili Fedor were united. This was the height of happiness to them all.

The Tartars had been repulsed in their double attack on the town. Warsili Fedor, with his little band, had driven back the first assailants who presented themselves at the Bolchaïa gate, expecting to find it open for them, and which, by an instinctive feeling often arising from sound judgment, he had determined to remain at and defend.

At the same time as the Tartars were driven back the besieged had mastered the fire. The liquid naphtha having rapidly burnt to the surface of the water, the flames did not go beyond the houses on the shore, and left the other quarters of the town uninjured.

Before daybreak the troops of Feofar-Khan had retreated into their camp, leaving a large number of dead on and below the ramparts.

Among the dead was the gipsy

Sangarre, who had vainly endeavoured to join Ivan Ogareff.

For two days the besiegers attempted no fresh assault. They were discouraged by the death of Ogareff. This man was the main-spring of the invasion, and he alone, by his plots long since contrived, had had sufficient influence over the khans and their hordes to bring them to the conquest of Asiatic Russia.

However, the defenders of Irkutsk kept on their guard, and the investment still continued; but on the 7th of October, at day-break, cannon boomed out from the heights around Irkutsk.

It was the succouring army under the command of General Kisselef, and it was thus that he made known his welcome arrival to the Grand Duke.

The Tartars did not wait to be attacked. Not daring to run the risk of a battle under the walls of Irkutsk, they immediately broke up the Augara camp.

Irkutsk was at last relieved.

With the first Russian soldiers, two of Michael's friends entered the city. They were the inseparable Blount and Jolivet. On gaining the right bank of the Augara, by means of the icy barrier, they had escaped, as had the other fugitives, before the flames had reached their raft. This had been noted by Alcide Jolivet in his book in this way:

'Ran a narrow chance of being finished up like a lemon in a bowl of punch!'

Their joy was great on finding Nadia and Michael safe and sound, above all when they learnt that their brave companion was not blind. Harry Blount inscribed this observation:

'Red-hot iron is insufficient in some cases to destroy the sensibility of the optic nerve.'

Then the two correspondents,

settled for a time in Irkutsk, busied themselves in putting the notes and impressions of their journey in order; thence were sent to London and Paris two interesting articles relative to the Tartar invasion, and which, a rare thing, did not contradict each other even on the least important points.

The remainder of the campaign was unfortunate to the Emir and his allies. This invasion, futile as all which attack the Russian Colossus, was very fatal to them. They soon found themselves cut off by the Czar's troops, who retook in succession all the conquered towns. Besides this the winter was terrible, and, decimated by the cold, only a small part of these hordes returned to the steppes of Tartary.

The Irkutsk road, by way of the Ural mountains, was now open. The Grand Duke was anxious to return to Moscow, but he delayed his journey to be present at a touching ceremony, which took place a few days after the entry of the Russian troops.

Michael Strogoff sought Nadia, and in her father's presence said to her,

'Nadia, my sister still, when you left Riga to come to Irkutsk, did you leave it with any other regret than that for your mother?'

'No,' replied Nadia; 'none of any sort whatever.'

'Then nothing of your heart remains there?'

'Nothing, brother.'

'Then, Nadia,' said Michael, 'I think that God, in allowing us to meet and to go through so many severe trials together, must have meant us to be united for ever.'

'Ah!' said Nadia, falling into Michael's arms. Then turning towards Warsili Fedor—

'My father!' said she, blushing.

'Nadia,' said Captain Fedor, 'it will be my joy to call you both my children!'

The marriage ceremony took place in Irkutsk cathedral. Though simple in its details, it was unusually brilliant, in consequence of the presence of the whole civil and military population, who wished to show their deep gratitude to the two young people, whose *Odysey* had already become legendary.

Jolivet and Blount very naturally assisted at this marriage, of which they wished to give an account to their readers.

'And doesn't it make you wish to imitate them?' asked Alcide of his friend.

'Pooh!' said Blount. 'Now if I had a cousin like you—'

'My cousin isn't to be married!' answered Alcide, laughing.

'So much the better,' returned Blount, 'for they speak of difficulties arising between London and Pekin. Have you no wish to go and see what is going on there?'

'By Jove, my dear Blount!' exclaimed Alcide Jolivet, 'I was just going to make the same proposal to you.'

And that was how the two inseparables set off for China.

A few days after the ceremony Michael and Nadia Strogoff, accompanied by Warsili Fedor, took the route to Europe. The road so full of suffering when going was a road of joy in returning. They travelled swiftly, in one of those sleighs which glide like an express train across the frozen steppes of Siberia.

However, when they reached the banks of the Dinka, just before Birscoï, they stopped for a while.

Michael found the place where he had buried poor Nicholas. A cross was erected there, and Nadia prayed a last time on the grave of

the humble and heroic friend, whom neither of them would ever forget

At Omsk, old Marfa awaited them in the little house of the Strogoffa. She clasped passionately in her arms the girl whom in her heart she had already a hundred times called daughter. The brave old Siberian, on that day, had the right to recognise her son and say she was proud of him.

After a few days passed at Omsk, Michael and Nadia entered Eu-

rope, and, Warsili Fedor settling down in St. Petersburg, neither his son nor his daughter had any occasion to leave him, except to go and see their old mother.

The young courier was received by the Czar, who attached him specially to his own person, and gave him the Cross of St. George.

In the course of time, Michael Strogoff reached a high station in the empire. But it is not the history of his success, but the history of his trials which deserves to be related.

The End.

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